

Winter 1961

LOCUS SOLUS

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LOCUS SOLUS

I

«L'écriteau bref qui s'offre à l'œil apitoyé»

ROUSSEL

*One hundred copies of LOCUS SOLUS I have been
printed in a limited numbered edition.*

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On the Go

Atlantic
City in a
Stutz
Bearcat

John and I drove through Atlantic City in our Stutz Bearcat. Everyone admired the car; and since the car moved perfectly John got an idea.

The rage
for order

“What I propose to do,” John said, “is to organize a trip through the United States in this car, after which there will be a different sense of order apparent to anyone traveling through this same territory.” We first stopped at a small town, and John went into a drugstore to buy cigarettes.

Pall Malls,
please

He went into the drugstore. “Pall Malls, please!” At the same time he heard a lady’s voice behind him saying, “Pall Malls, please!” He smiled at her and then came out to the car for a smoke.

At the
Rin Tin Tin
movie

In the evening there did not seem to be very much to do in that town. However there was a Rin Tin Tin movie showing at the local theatre, and John went to it.

Afterwards

Afterwards John stopped in a bar and met a couple of girls there who wanted a ride to Hollywood. John said he'd take them. One was blonde and one was red-haired. So all got into the car.

Driving
to
Hollywood

It seemed as though we'd hardly stopped speeding, all the way across the country and back. John said he was glad to see Hollywood, but he didn't want to stay there. So after we let the girls off, he started up the motor again almost immediately, and we drove and drove toward the east.

The last
piece of
mascara

We had driven by now a few thousand miles, a lot of it very recently. John insisted that now we were going to go slower, and take our time more. He remembered how frantic one girl had gotten on the drive to Hollywood when she'd discovered that there remained only one piece of mascara! We stopped in a gas station to fill up, and there was a boy there who seemed to be going in our direction. He asked for a ride and John said O.K.

Some
inventions

The kid got into the car. John asked him what he had in his pocket, and he showed us—it was a wooden thermometer he'd gotten from the gas station.

John told him about the pine needle windshield wiper that he was going to have made for the car, and the boy said that there was a kind of cushion that had been invented which could be put down on any surface, even a sharp rock. He also told about a drug that had been invented to give boxers when they were K.O.'d.

"My mother
is Mrs.
Prentiss."

The boy told us, "My mothers is Mrs. Prentiss, the one who writes for the fashion magazine." After John let him off, we stopped at a bar. "Whiskey!" John said.

Dream
drinks

The bartender said, "I am sorry, we are out of Scotch, rye, and bourbon. But I can mix you some wonderful 'dream drinks' made with rum, gin, creme de menthe, creme de cacao, or vermouth that are really smooth going down and are wonderful for this hot weather." John had a kind of rum and creme de cacao punch, and then he got into the car. John wondered why there had been none of the main whiskies.

On the
fairgrounds
at night

The reason was that the night before there had been a great deal of drinking going on at the fairgrounds. John was cautioned by a traffic policeman to drive

very carefully, as the other drivers might not be up to par on this day. "What was the drinking for?" John asked. The policeman answered that twice each year there were various local celebrations on the fairgrounds during the evening.

Public
oilwells

We drove past some public oilwells. The oil had been discovered on property belonging to the county seat, and was therefore now for public use. A really beautiful girl came out into a doorway and stared at the car. John stopped, and looked for her in wonderment, but she was gone.

A beauty
queen

"That girl you have see is nothing ordinary," said a man of middle age who spoke to John with a big smile. "She is a beauty queen, one of the bestlooking girls in this territory... But I believe I have heard of you and your project. Let me introduce myself."

Mr. Ter-
ranhauser

The man who had come over introduced himself as Mr. Terranhauser. He said he had heard with pleasure about our projected trip through the United States. He talked for some time.

"Blessed
are
the meek."

Afterwards Mr. Terranhauser said, "Goodbye. Remember, 'Blessed are the meek.' Do not be taken in by big shows

of force like British Imperialism." John said goodbye and we drove on.

British
Imperialism

As we got into the next town John said, "After all, if it weren't for 'British Imperialism' our country wouldn't exist at all!" The houses were an orangish-yellow color in this town, and very close together.

Soapsuds

In the window John saw a woman doing her washing, and some of the soapsuds were dripping down over the window sill. Driving into the center of town we stopped at a church near a park.

The Bell
of Cats

Above the steeple was a famous bell, called "The Bell of Cats." It was a bell that for some reason, no one knew why, cats used to hang on, sometimes as many as four or five, during the night. We were sitting in the car looking at it.

Primary
colors

We noticed that there were flags up over the dome of a big building, in the primary colors as well as in white and black. There was a tremendous crowd of people around. John asked what it was, and we were told.

The music
contest

The affair was a music contest. John and I rolled past it. A little after there were two persons standing on the curb who wanted rides, so John stopped for

Language teachers them. The two people to whom we'd given a lift were language teachers. When they got out, a man dressed in an old uniform came up to the car.

"I fought at Valley Forge." "I fought at Valley Forge," the man said, "and I would like to sell you a subscription to a magazine which the British have tried to force to cease publication. They have no right to interfere with our liberty of the press, so you can take this subscription to *Ballyhoo* with confidence. And I hope you will be able to hold your ground on this, because nine times out of ten the British will give in to you eventually." But then John interrupted him, and stared with an excited air over the left side of the car at a woman who was passing.

A subscription to *Ballyhoo*

"Nine times out of ten the British will..."

The Nixies Palm Beach in a fur coat "Only the Nixies could have brought her here," said John, "because she is the... woman we had seen in Palm Beach in a fur coat!"

Suffolk John's mind was torn for a minute, because he felt he ought to try and make it by night to Suffolk.

That woman might be interesting But then John started up the car again. He stared at the woman in the fur coat, and we started on after her.

The Circus

1

We will have to go away, said the girls in the circus
And never come back any more. There is not enough
of an audience

In this little town. Waiting against the black, blue sky
The big circus chariots took them into their entrances.

The light rang out over the hill where the circus wagons dimmed away.

Underneath their dresses the circus girls were sweating,

But then, an orange tight sticking to her, one spoke with

Blue eyes, she was young and pretty, blonde

With bright eyes, and she spoke with her mouth open when she sneezed

Lightly against the backs of the other girls waiting in line

To clock the rope, or come spinning down with her teeth on the line,

And she said that the circus might leave—and red posters

Stuck to the outside of the wagon, it was beginning to
Rain—she said might leave but not her heart would
ever leave
Not that town but just any one where they had been,
risking their lives,
And that each place they were should be celebrated
by blue rosemary
In a patch, in the town. But they laughed and said
Sentimental
Blondo, and she laughed, and they all, circus girls,
clinging
To each other as the circus wagons rushed through
the night.

2

In the next wagon, the one forward of theirs, the
next wagon
Was the elephants' wagon. A grey trunk dragged on
the floor...

3

Orville the Midget tramped up and down. Paul the
Separated Man
Leaped forward. It rained and rained. Some people
in the cities
Where they passed through were sitting behind thick
glass

Windows, talking about their brats and drinking
chocolate syrup.

4

Minnie the Rabbit fingered her machine gun.
The bright day was golden.
She aimed the immense pine needle at the foxes
Thinking Now they will never hurt my tribe any
more.

5

The circus wagons stopped during the night
For eighteen minutes in a little town called Rosebud,
Nebraska.
It was after dinner it was after bedtime it was after
nausea it was
After lunchroom. The girls came out and touched
each other and had fun
And just had time to get a breath of the fresh air of
the night in
Before the ungodly procession began once more
down the purple highway.

6

With what pomp and ceremony the circus arrived
orange and red in the dawn!

It was exhausted, cars and wagons, and it lay down
and leaped
Forward a little bit, like a fox. Minnie the Rabbit
shot a little woolen bullet at it,
And just then the elephant man came to his doorway
in the sunlight and stood still.

7

The snoring circus master wakes up, he takes it on
himself to arrange the circus.
Soon the big tent floats high. Birds sing on the tent.
The parade girls and the living statue girls and the
trapeze girls.
Cover their sweet young bodies with phosphorescent
paint.
Some of the circus girls are older women, but each
is beautiful.
They stand, waiting for their cues, at the doorway of
the tent.
The sky-blue lion tamer comes in, and the red giraffe
manager.
They are very brave and wistful, and they look at
the girls.
Some of the circus girls feel a hot sweet longing in
their bodies.
But now it is time for the elephants!
Slowly the giant beasts march in. Some of their legs
are clothed in blue papier-maché ruffles.

One has a red eye. The elephant man is at the peak
of happiness.
He speaks, giddily, to every one of the circus people
he passes,
He does not know what he is saying, he does not
care—
His elephants are on display! They walk into the
sandy ring...

8

Suddenly a great scream breaks out in the circus tent!
It is Aileen the trapeze artist, she has fallen into the
dust and dirt
From so high! She must be dead! The stretcher
bearers rush out,
They see her lovely human form clothed in red and
white and orange wiry net,
And they see that she does not breathe any more.
The circus doctor leaves his tent, he runs out to care
for Aileen.
He traverses the circus grounds and the dusty floor
of the circus entrance, and he comes
Where she is, now she has begun to move again, she
is not dead,
But the doctor tells her he does not know if she will
ever be able to perform on the trapeze again,
And he sees the beautiful orange and red and white
form shaken with sobs,

And he puts his hand on her forehead and tells her
she must lie still.

9

The circus girls form a cortège, they stand in file in
the yellow and white sunlight.

“What is death in the circus? That depends on if it
is spring.

Then, if elephants are there, *mon père*, we are not
completely lost.

Oh the sweet strong odor of beasts which laughs at
decay!

Decay! decay! We are like the elements in a kalei-
doscope,

But such passions we feel! bigger than beaches and
Rustier than harpoons.” After his speech the circus
practitioner sat down.

10

Minnie the Rabbit felt the blood leaving her little
body

As she lay in the snow, orange and white,
A beautiful design. The dog laughs, his tongue hangs
out, he looks at the sky.

It is white. The master come. He laughs. He picks
up Minnie the Rabbit

And ties her to a pine tree bough, and leaves.

Soon through the forest came the impassioned bumble bee.

He saw the white form on the bough. "Like rosebuds when you are thirteen," said Elmer.

Iris noticed that he didn't have any cap on.

"You must be polite when mother comes," she said.

The sky began to get grey, then the snow came.

The two tots pressed together, Elmer opened his mouth and let the snow fall in it. Iris felt warm and happy.

Bang! went the flyswatter. Mr. Watkins, the circus manager, looked around the room.

"Damn it, damn these flies!" he said. Mr. Loftus, the circus clerk, stared at the fly interior he had just exposed.

The circus doctor stood beside the lake. In his hand he had a black briefcase.

A wind ruffled the surface of the lake and slightly rocked the boats.

Red and green fish swam beneath the surface of the water.

The doctor went into the lunchroom and sat down.

No, he said, he didn't care for anything to eat.

The soft wind of summer blew in the light green trees.

The Railway Stationery

The railway stationery lay upon
The desk of the railway clerk, from where he could
see

The springtime and the tracks. Engraved upon
Each page was an inch-and-a-half-high *T*
And after that an *H* and then an *E*
And then, slightly below it to the right,
There was *COLUMBUS RAILWAY COMPANY*
In darker ink as the above was light.
The print was blue. And just beneath it all
There was an etching –not in blue, but black–
Of a big railway engine half-an-inch tall
Which, if you turned the paper on its back,
You could see showing through, as if it ran
To one edge of the sheet then back again.

To one edge of the sheet then back again!
The springtime comes while we're still drenched in
snow

And, whistling now, snow-spotted Number Ten
Comes up the track and stops, and we must go
Outside to get its cargo, with our hands

Cold as the steel they touch. Inside once more,
Once we have shut the splintery wooden door
Of the railway shack, the stationery demands
Our further notice. For the first time the light,
Reflected from the snow by the bright spring sun,
Shows that the engine wheel upon the right
Is slightly darker than the left-side one
And slightly lighter than the one in the center,
Which may have been an error of the printer.

Shuffling through many sheets of it to establish
Whether this difference is consistent will
Prove that it is not. Probably over-lavish
At the beginning with the ink, he still
(The printer) had the presence of mind to change
His operating process when he noticed
That on the wheels the ink had come out strange.
Because the windows of the shack are latticed
The light that falls upon the stationery
Is often interrupted by straight lines
Which shade the etching. Now the words "Dear
Mary"

Appear below the engine on one sheet
Followed by a number of other conventional signs,
Among which are "our love," "one kiss," and
"sweet."

The clerk then signs name —his name is Johnson,
But all he signs is Bill, with a large *B*

Which overflows its boundaries like a Ronson
With too much fluid in it, which you see
Often, and it can burn you, though the *I*
Was very small and had a tiny dot.
The *l*'s were different—the first was high,
The second fairly low. And there was a spot
Of ink at the end of the signature which served
To emphasize that the letter was complete.
On the whole, one could say his writing swerved
More than the average, although it was neat.
He'd used a blue-black ink, a standing pen,
Which now he stuck back in its stand again.

Smiling and sighing, he opened up a drawer
And took an envelope out, which then he sealed
After he'd read the letter three times more
And folded it and put it in. A field
Covered with snow, untouched by man, is what
The envelope resembled, till he placed
A square with perforated edges that
Pictured a white-haired President, who faced
The viewer, in its corner, where it stuck
After he'd kissed its back and held it hard
Against the envelope. Now came the truck
Of the postman. "Hello, Jim." "Hello there, Bill."
"I've got this—can you take it?" "Sure, I will!"

Now the snow fell down gently from the sky.
Strange wonder—snow in spring! Bill walked into

The shack again and wrote the letter /
Idly upon a sheet of paper. New
Ideas for writing Mary filled his mind,
But he resisted—there was work to do.
For in the distance he could hear the grind
Of the Seventy-Eight, whose engine was half blue;
So, putting on a cap, he went outside
On the tracks side, to wait for it, to come.
It was the Seventy-Eight which now supplied
The city with most of its produce, although some
Came in by truck and some was grown in town.
Now it screams closer, and he flags it down.

Afternoons

I

The Location of Things

Why from this window am I watching leaves?
Why do halls and steps seem narrower?
Why at this desk am I listening for the sound of the
 fall
of color, the pitch of the wooden floor
and feet going faster?
Am I to understand change, whether remarkable
or hidden, am I to find a lake under the table
or a mountain beside my chair
and will I know the minute water produces lilies
or a family of mountaineers scales the peak?

Recognitions

On Madison Avenue I am having a drink, someone
with dark hair balances a carton on his shoulders
and a painter enters the bar. It reminds me
of pictures in restaurants, the exchange of hunger

for thirst, art for decoration and in a hospital
love for pain suffered beside the glistening rhodo-
dendron

under the crucifix. The street, the street bears light
and shade on its shoulders, walks without crying,
turns itself into another and continues, even
cantilevers this barroom atmosphere into a forest
and sheds its leaves on my table .

carelessly as if it wanted to travel somewhere else
and would like to get ride of its luggage
which has become in this exquisite pointed rain
a bundle of umbrellas. An exchange!

That head against the window
how many times one has seen it. Afternoons
of smoke and wet nostrils,
the perilous make-up on her face and on his,
numerous corteges. The water's lace creates funerals
it makes us see someone we love in an acre of grass.

The regard of dramatic afternoons

Through this floodlit window
or from a pontoon on this theatrical lake,
you demand your old clown's paint and I hand you
from my prompter's arm this shako,
wandering as I am into clouds and air
rushing into darkness as corridors
who do not fear the thick melancholy of the stair.

II

Windy Afternoon

Through the wood
on his motorcycle piercing
the hawk, the jay
the blue-coated policeman

Woods, barren woods
as this typewriter without an object
or the words that from you
fall soundless

The sun lowering
and the bags of paper
on the stoney ledge
near the waterfall

Voices down the roadway
and leaves falling over there
a great vacancy
a huge left over

The quality of the day
that has its size in the North
and in the South
a low sighing that of wings

Describe that nude, audacious line
most lofty, practiced street
you are no longer thirsty
turn or go straight

III

Russians at the Beach

The long long accent
the short vowel
that thing wrapped around a palm tree
is it this water, or this jetty?

The blue, in air dismal
to the face further than sand
then green rolling its own powder
you will provide you stranger

The cargo, intimate cargo
of lashes and backs bent like a crew
the miles are vast and the isthmus
shows five-toed feet
erect thunders all afternoon

You have travelled
more than this shore where

the long bodies
 wait
 their thin heads
do not understand

They are bent
 the breeze is light
 as the step of a native is heavy
you are tired
 but you breathe
 and you eat
and you sleep where the stream is narrow
 where the foam has left off
 ascending
the day meets your borders
 so easily
where you have discovered it

Mélisande

An idyll of clouds
on your head a blue basket
winning stranger

your sighs and your twilight
kisses too often have you buried in floating
omnisciences

little wanderer
tril trill moss ribbons

frogs in the shallows

dusk
and clouds over yonder
no above

where the lost ring lies in its pool

the pool
has discovered you wills you to grow
higher

where good
comes of it look! out of the water
rising

see

the crown bearing clouds!

River Side

I

It smells like smoke

wet air
the white boat propeller

'life on the river' coherent a mossy mud game
as silent as oars permit

batiste blouse my sky
will have its week

then thunder and the water
other colors

II

Dreams restore soundings

how deep you are
a school of fishes has been brought up
on your absence flashing
while the shore responds to echoes
such as the train whistle thud

usually motors enjoy the act of repeating
themselves

mostly it is the dark water

understanding itself
plumbing as the rooster
for drunken masts

III

the beautiful tomorrow
is misty
the hills breathe its oxygen
a final sway
of climate
produces those rose waves
and the city
tires of its energy
allows
buildings to darken a doorway
is black

Clouds
start to pile
on northshore
their bodies thicken
stunningly

in the water
their reflection gives latitude
what was there
in the light
changes
The sun
easing down
a shadow
commences its brilliance shows
its arm where the bridge
tiring
leans towards the shore
trees lower
a branch remains
purple

IV

All answering darkness at the edge
middle deepest
knows itself as past, parts
only from tribal when storms
cause emergency.
Can bear ice,
ships, tugs, rags, rafts. Will destroy
swimmers. Has a strong undespondent
current is glorious
at full moon
a sturdy tide.

Likes strangers
prefers the seasoned.

Will go
farther than is supposed into the sea.

V

A Presence walks the damp leaf banks
air's ghost
guide
the river follows.

Glides

under the new fresh fog no longer earth
only memory

deeper

continuing past our murmur and
our breathing

VI

Renouncing his shadow the boatswain refuses a vic-
tory

Pursuing indifference the man in the scull rests his
oars

Palm Trees

What an arch your
 heavy burlap branches
 decide they'll go into!
(the first plunge did not destroy
that green youth hid itself)
And now freshly you start to go upward
You want to reach a curve that will draw
 the sky to yourself and say blue
 here is your arabesque!
The woman walks near you
Under the sea a fern resembles you
The heat stops and waits
 and you give nothing.
Calm fan no one touches

All Grey-Haired My Sisters

All grey-haired my sisters
what is it in the more enduring
clime of Spring that waits?
The tiger his voice once prayerful
around the lax ochre sheen
finally in withering sleep
its calendar,

Relatives

delicious plumages your scenery
has a black musical depth
the cardinal flies into
he learns to repeat on an empty
branch your distillations. Sombre
mysteries the garden illumines
a shape of honey hive
the vigorous drones lighting
up your face as fortunes pour
from your cold pockets into the heat
and glaze, fortresses
for those memories brisk
in the now doubling air,

Adventuresses

guided by the form and scent
of tree and flower blossoming
the willow once frail now image
cut of stone so to endure,

My darlings

*you walked into the wars
with wreaths of pine cones, you lay
by the sea and your sweet dresses
were torn by waves as over each receded
and pebbles were lifted at your feet
in the foam,*

Ancestress

*with blonde boating hair
as daisies drop at your wrists
which flight are you making?
down the lime aisles
I see your sashes disappear.*

Why should I count you more equinoctal, sun?
Smoothly the oars into the bay
the ultramarine fast as a castle, or rock
its soul plunged to craters virginal
the rapid twist of spume to all-forgetting
wrecks, intensely now that story's done.
Mermaids your hair is green. I recognize
the powerful daylight heat. My savages

a cooling torpor rearranges,
as at its southern margins, the oak.

From your journals

He said: "In nymphic barque".

She replied: "A porcupine".

And later,

"Reason selects our otherness".

In the broad strange light,
a region of silences. The delphic
clouded tree knows its decline,
if you were to forget animosities, girls,
and in the pagan grass slide heedlessly
blossoms would return such songs
as I've sung of you, the youthful ashes
fling upward settling fragrant
brightness on your dusky marquetry,

All grey-haired my sisters
this afternoon's seraphicness
is also fading. Linger while
I pass you quickly lest the cherry's
bloom changed to white
fall upon my head.

Current Events

A bewildering scene met the eye of pedestrians in front of the bus depot on the south-east corner of Main and Cheektowaga on a recent Saturday morning April the twenty-third. Dominating the orderly throng, gradually assembled from about 7:30 A. M., was the retiring figure of Miss Bellows, home-room teacher and class-advisor who kept well in the background due to conducting the excursion along democratic lines with elected officers chosen by secret ballot Tuesday last. Notable for their absence were Priscilla Jones, Pauline Hutchy and Joseph Magoratoro, latest victims claimed by German measles.

Welcome back to class Priscilla and Pauline and a quick recovery to Joe. Your absence was sincerely noted and deeply felt by one and all.

While assigned seating was efficiently dispatched by Richmond Crane, Class Treasurer in charge of alphabetical seating to avoid hard feelings with seat exchange on the return for better views, your historian interviewed Mr. Olson, our capable driver.

Mr. Olson, of Swedish descent on both sides, migrated to this country at the early age of two

where he grew up attending Vocational High in this city. After gaining experience around Army trucks during the Great War in which he did not go overseas he subsequently became a driver for Inter-State Bus Lines not missing a day's work since for which higher-ups singled him out for an award. His specialty is driving charter buses including pilgrimages gotten up by civic groups for which he is well acquainted with historic sights all over our land, such as Monticello, historic home of Thomas Jefferson. The scar some may have noted under the visor of Mr. Olson's cap dates from a fall through a greenhouse at the age of three and one half. Mr. Olson's father was in the greenhouse business at the time. He is since retired.

All present and accounted for except the above mentioned at 7:45 sharp Mr. Olson shut the pneumatic door and set his powerful bus in motion. It was off on another never to be forgotten excursion for the Eighth Grade Classmates of School Thirty-Six. Under the skilled leadership of Gloria Honig all joined in singing the National Anthem, the School Anthem and the Class Song, words by Gloria Honig, music by Percy Grainger.

At the intersection of Main and North Dakota Boulevard the group met with a mishap. To spare the feelings of present company your historian will skip details, familiar to all, and merely remark in passing that if you incline to car sickness it is the

better part of wisdom to get out at the beginning and not suffer the whole live long day. As the bus rolled out into open country a vote of sympathy was taken for the hastily departed. The motion was made by Marilyn Skinker, seconded by Joel Price and unanimously passed.

No notable occurrences happened before reaching the State Capitol and the two hour and eighteen minute trip slipped by unheeded in conversations, group singing, games and bird watching by members of the Audubon Club.

First impressions of the capitol city of our state got interrupted when one of our number took a bad spill getting off the bus. No serious injury was sustained beyond having the wind knocked out of him and losing a button off his mackinaw. In a subsequent interview your reporter learned the button was about due to come off anyhow. This unforeseen mishap brought to the attention of all the controversial subject of shoving. Officers of the Class Council report they intend giving the matter their close scrutiny and undivided attention.

Popular opinion among those who never saw the city before was voiced by Marilyn Skinker inadvertently exclaiming, "It's so small!" and the fact a city of such import is one-tenth the size of our home city and a good deal less counting suburbs in the total metropolitan area takes some getting used to. An anonymous bystander reports Miss Bellows was

overheard to aver that appearances are deceiving. It is true that all they have got to do there is govern things and as Washington D. C. is not as big as New York, Chicago or numerous other cities it is probably big enough as it is.

First stop before taking in any sights was milk-break at the Capitol Luncheonette. General comportment having been discussed well in advance our class president, Morris Milkopper reports he is happy to state straw fights, napkin raids and sugar snitching for souvenirs kept to a minimum if at all. Some Indian wrestling between the boys did not degenerate into rowdyness.

During a lull before setting out your historian garnered on-the-spot opinions as to what it is like living in a state capitol from Miss Bock, waitress at the Capitol Luncheonette. Miss Bock is in daily contact with legislators of all classes and finds our leaders much the same as other people except for the voice. The voice in general she says is bigger and deeper. She says you cannot make out the words as there is not any shouting but when they are in all the booths talking it sets up a heavy hum. Sometimes the glassware rattles. Miss Bock definitely prefers living where she is to moving some place else.

Owing to the informal occasion classmates and your historian did not form into files after roll call outside the Capitol Luncheonette. Instead, profiting

by Miss Bellowes previous experience, all moved in a homogenous mass across State Street, principle shopping street of the city lined with shops, through Courthouse Square and around the corner to Capitol Heights. All paused to marvel at the floral lay-out. It shows the state flag flanked by the state arms in a design composed entirely of living plants that later on will burst into a riot of bloom.

Then all turned to marvel at the Capitol itself an imposing edifice built entirely out of native materials mostly red sandstone and composite. The cornerstone of the vast structure was laid in 1902 following the total destruction of the earlier historic capitol in a conflagration. The dome alone is one-third higher than the one on the National Capitol and made out of cast-iron. It is topped by an effigy. Plans to coat the dome with solid gold leaf fell though owing to the vast expense. Otherwise it would be the biggest gold dome in the world. As it is it dwarfs all surroundings.

After making the ascent of the fifty-two steps from the top of which new governors make their gubernatorial speeches more marvels met the startled gaze within. Mere words alone cannot summon up the unforgettable spectacle of Thaddeus Borroughman's masterpiece *Peace and Plenty* carved out of a single block of alabaster lit from within revolving slowly on its bronze base depicting scenes from the early history of the state in the awe-inspiring gloom

under the vast dome. After a respectful silence Joel Price, who read up on it in advance, explained what the different figures mean and how as well as being the best you can do in sculpture it was also an engineering feat and triumph of science just getting it in place.

Around the hall in niches plaster casts of ancient statuary such as the Discus Thrower recalled Olympic days and invited comparison with the city our State Capitol is the most like, also built on hills.

As per previous arrangement, Mr. Carl Krause, one of the five official Capitol guides took over group leadership. Your historian will not attempt listing the sights he pointed out in the multitudinous halls since one and all will never forget them anyhow. The cases of tomahawks and ante-bellum firearms proved of greater interest to the boys while the Anne Chatfield room of relics such as clothing of the wife of the first governor found favor with the girls.

En route to the balcony overlooking the State Senate Chambers which was in session your historian elicited the following comments from Mr. Krause.

All five of the guides got their start in state civil service and do guiding for income supplement to their pensions. Mr. Krause is of the opinion pensions need looking into. He went on to say pensions could be bigger without the average tax payer feeling it in his pocket book. Mr. Krause rates the State Capitol as the most imposing structure on the continent

previous to Boulder Dam. He holds it superior to any known skyscraper since skyscrapers do not have domes. Mr. Krause and the other four guides are native born in that city of remote German descent as are most of the people there the original settlers being off-shoots of Lutheranism. Mr. Krause also holds there is more heavy eating than any other place he ever was. Dumplings are a feature of almost any meal in the typical home and Mr. Krause single-handed eats a pound of farmer cheese for breakfast.

The balcony of the State Senate Chamber commands a fine view of what is going on. At time of arrival not much was. Each senator has his own leather chair and a desk for papers facing the rostrum decked with flags. The subject under discussion was what to do about some hot springs that turned up on a tract a public spirited farmer left the state for a beaver and duck preserve. This could be made into a park and general recreation area for people to visit and relax in except that might attract hunters, vandals and other thoughtless persons who would scare away the ducks and beavers from land rightfully theirs. On the other hand who is going to pay for watching it and looking out for the beavers' best interests and so on? Right now we are and while the expense is not incaculable these things add up the distinguished balding senator who had the floor pointed out. A side issue is a private enterprise that wants to benefit people by making the most out of

the hot springs. It says beavers do not mind people watching them and furthermore what is now a total loss could become a source of revenue lightening the taxpayers' burden without hurting the wilderness any. Then a very old senator got the floor and started telling about the role of the beaver in building up our country from next to nothing. He was an orator of the old school and used his hands a lot. That is out of date but when he stopped for breath you could hear a pin drop. That is an advantage of old style oratory. You can drown people out and really make them listen.

Sitting in on democracy in action was the high point of the excursion for the civic minded class. Since the issue wasn't such a burning one not so many senators were in evidence. Some observers noted with surprise how senators talked and got up and walked around while one of their number was speaking. Being a senator is a high pressure job and the remuneration is not as great as in other lines of endeavor. People should think about this at the polls. Perhaps if senators got a raise they could concentrate more.

This enlightening visit was cut short by the lunch hour. Many already felt yearnings in that direction and began casting suspicious glances at Beverly Elder, official excursion time keeper. But the ever punctual Beverly gave the signal right on the dot of one when the historic carillons began their daily concert. At

her signal hungry excursionists happily adjourned to the Colonial Inn casting a reluctant glance at the Senate Chamber which many may never see again though who knows what the future holds in store?

The Colonial Inn surpassed expectations. Completely restored to its original state in 1933, it includes waitresses in period costume and a fireplace big enough to roast an ox in. Only native foods produced by the state are featured on the regional menu a copy of which was presented to each diner for a souvenir. Foods included chicken, native grown vegetables, corn bread and cherry cobbler. The latter was accompanied by the thick cream produced by the cows for which the north of our state is justly renowned.

In an off-the-record interview your historian gleaned some interesting sidelights on what running such a far-famed hostelry is like from Mr. Keal, permanent manager in residence at the Colonial Inn. Mr. Keal gained wide experience in the hotel field before taking on the Inn, his most challenging position to date. For instance, at the start uncompromising plans for serving only colonial foods came up against present day food tastes and dietetics. People eat less nowadays, Mr. Keal cited, and consider gorging bad for health while way back then nobody thought of drinking the indispensable orange juice or even invented grapefruit. So they compromised by featuring state food with supplementaries. Radia-

tors also presented a jarring note but that was solved in a number of ingenious ways. In his experienced opinion the Inn is much more than just a place to eat and sleep. It is living history, he stressed. All who visited it will concur.

Mounted photographs of the excursionists at lunch taken by Mrs. Parker, official Colonial Inn photographer, are available at one dollar, suitable for framing. Interested parties please contact Richmond Crane.

Following the photographing a post-prandial tour around nearby streets filled in the time before bus departure. Classmates noted with surprise that first-run movies are a good three weeks behind our own and ascertained they only have two first-run movie houses. More unique was a sight of the governor's mansion well protected by its typical iron fence and gates. As the party filed by an older woman thought to be the first lady of the state got into a chauffeur driven limousine along with a man rumored to be governor's son, the distinguished attorney.

Back at the Capitol Luncheonette which sees double duty as bus stop the group rejoined driver Olson and his bus at 2:45 P.M. sharp. Loading was conducted with dispatch and without incident when checking the roll just previous to departure the alarming discovery was made that two of our party were missing! Speculations were rife and energetic plans afoot for a search party when the two in question

appeared out of a drugstore down the street. It developed half the couple finds cherry cobbler indigestible and the other gallantly squired her in a sundae. As democracy was the order of the day the incident passed without reprimand although the self-conscious pair did not escape jocular thrusts and some good natured ribbing.

The return trip was enlivened by a cloud burst.

Tired but happy the excursionists adjourned home a few assembling at Sweet's for discussion and opinion-comparing. The beaver and duck preserve issue received especially hot debate demonstrating the lively interest our generation takes in state, national and civic issues. Although not put to the vote opinion weighed heavily in favor of the wild life. Level heads felt a marked possibility of compromise since the question of how the animals feel about having a lot of people around is at present unresolved.

Your historian feels he voices the opinion of one and all in pronouncing the State Capitol excursion an unparalleled success. Considering the distance and quantity of people it is without precedent in class history it should have gone off almost 100% smoothly. The committee in charge rates a resounding vote of confidence but I see my time is up and so will not name them individually. On behalf of classmates I will simply say, thanks.

An announcement. Subject of next week's panel

discussion following regular Current Events Club business is, could the stock market crash of 1920 have been averted, and if so, how? Open discussion will follow the debate and those wishing to take an informed part had better read up on it, so be prepared.

The First of May

Now the smallest creatures, who do not know they
 have names,
In fields of pure sunshine open themselves and sing.
All over the marshes and in the wet meadows,
Wherever there is water, the companies of peepers
Who cannot count their members, gather with sweet
 shouting.
And the flowers of the woods who cannot see each
 other
Appear in perfect likeness of one another
Among the weak new shadows on the mossy places.

Now the smallest creatures, who know themselves
 by heart,
With all their tender might and roundness of delight
Spending their colors, their myriads and their voices
Praise the moist ground and every winking leaf,
And the new sun that smells of the new streams.

Other stories of the beauty wapiti

(down thru ages so have they come riding apollo
on his golden balls
perhaps nipping the corners of his jap prints

and yet flying in his beautiful youth with fur wings

and wings of lockspur dappled with wet pollen

going further yet on his molden foam

leaning his neck into the mad river of the north to the

diseased cheeks of mozart and the red wax of bachs ear

and his wifes gentle hoofs

as

an indian climbed with his wet back into the town

reeling from his globlets
of cloves

and the smoke from apollo's golden hem

(i report this for the wapiti come with many
instruments

sometime in blue
dancing soft folk songs

and of the last ghost that plagued wapiti in their hi
winter gardens
but his tresses hung lo

until in a square they spun with gray
profusions as he
danced

a ruby teated voice lost in the white eyed dawn
more than seventy thousand fathom deep so that
needle nosed ciliates breathed

(i say wapiti eated only minted fodder
scented with sunglares of pine apple
wet

ooo eee he sings
my pixon mate feeder her
dress her vagabonda

he is crying

ye this stories were seen by a lost girl weeping in
the park who would not
see him

dear wapiti she said eat me and your flaxen
tears

for the dogs run the
city biting breasts that burst from their lace
come away with me i
want my legs around your hips

and her burned with anticipation
drew wooden handles in his throat ,
but the eagle flew down
and the wapiti cried

then he let his haunches down
drink with me from the fountain children have played
polo all yesterday here
little women have wet their hair

dress apollo me in your golden sun and the fountain
played

i am chaste i am the
hours of time

wapiti 3

no thing in the sun can heal the earth
I suffer
this rain would not have come had I not wisht
the earth to crush
eaglets
from the sky who fall, who die a length eaglets fall
because the soil or the wood is illegal
always a reprimand or a curse
I am the son of smell
I know half as much
and the sun whose noise is screaming
and the lanterns of the sun
I burrow in the minds of owls

I burrow in conclusions
 in the measurement of a death
 in haste .

the deer visions of my kin were without sun and sun-
 set, they eat in a hole

of grey light

fearful of night
 but breast fed because the laws of night are diffe-
 rent .

I should not bethere, I come upon them in pure
 reason,

who run toward to leave me, who upon one doe back
 I sit

screaming

 what has no sweat

 has no white

I have flight, I have fallen in measurement

 risen silk

I love without pure reason

I believe in birth

 and the unfeathered wings are

strong enough .
there are other measurements

a poem is not fault or celebration, I believe in one
line

and repeat,
love and heap youth with desoiled flower .

love, the topographical touch of kierkegaard

which is like the crumbling ivy of williams, in which
neither in concerned .

I understand the wall, the gander, the desert not
the sea,
I gather dust because I burrow and fall .

sometimes I am smelling we rotten soil because my
hoofs sink where dogs lift their legs in perfume .

letters before poems I always say

they exist as I do
yet I am unpunctured unscarred ungrist

wild
as the undriven snow; am I mineral

god whose birds are pebbles and cheese?

god whose gore (kore) is not men or law .

concerning the soil

the length eaglets fall is a distance .

distance beside the sun and the soil,

a flight .

I believe in the gracious act, in sanctuary .

We will call this poem the bird in the sun

we dedicate it, misuse it for a gloria

because this is not direction but measurement,

because you are

students

you dislike it

which is shameful .

I dedicate to dying .

From «Sprach»

Familiar the deepest trails
I who are artless bow
that I may be born a good son

Go bare farthest afield
happiest
tho I am numberd & I know my time come

Pitted against what evil bounds
flashing eyes
that all I am of myself need little attention

Various suns making me crazy
& others also
& preserve their double university of one

It is my wish
given time
to develop a technique that can be recognized by
my son

Researching forgot trails
I who see him study
& the actual creative act of composing them.

Idaho

During the past few months, Biff had become quite a frequent visitor to Carol's apartment.

He never failed to marvel at the cool, corrected elegance of the place as contrasted with its warm, rippling, honey-blonde occupant. The apothecary jars,

Chippendale furniture,

and wall-to-wall carpeting were strangely out of keeping with Carol's habitual "Hiya good lookin'" as she came forward to greet him, wrapped in one of those big fuzzy bathrobes and drying her hair on a Turkish towel. Or were his calculations somehow awry? Was there, deep within this warm, vital-seeming presence a steel vein so thin as to be almost invisible? Or was this, too, a mistake?

Their whole conduct had been, up to now, not impersonal exactly, but utterly devoid of any recognition of sex-consciousness. In conversation they had "swapped backgrounds" as Biff called it. Carol, her eyes wet with tears at the picture of his isolation in the crowded rectory, had uttered a deep sigh at

her own recital of being left for the first eight years of her life to the sole care of Patches.

With the unconscious dramatic heightening that always goes with a sympathetic audience, each of them, intensely serious and really moved, had lifted corners of the veil for the other to peep through. They had been very close to each other in attention, in sympathy, in response, but with none of the subtle emphasis which marks the recognized intrusion of sex. Carol was aware today, however, that Biff had suddenly become obsessed with a sense of her; that he had caught fire. She was aware of

vast excitement,

apprehension,

a mental

“Can I give you a hand?”

She gave a little cry that was silenced by mouth on uttermost tingling nerve

“Carol!” he said. Can this be the one time

??

She had known how from

Biff: The last Rhode Island reds are

“diet of hamburgers and orange juice”

Exactly what kind of perfection????????????????

I see into fields of timothy

one

the others

time

change

,,,,,,and they walked back,
small hand-assemblies

“What does it mean?????????????”

Carol laughed. Among other things,
till I’ve finished it. It’s the reason of
dropped into Brentano’s.

get some of the
a pile of these. I just grabbed one one...

—Oh, by the way, there’s a tele-

“See?” She pointed to the table.

Cornelia unfolded the piece of crude blue paper that
is a French telegra.

//////////

The mouth of weeds

marriage.” She shivered. “It’s – it’s a
death!”

II.

The door of the studio slammed.

“Hullo, honey!” said Cornelia.

was the last practical from now on, whispers
leading into the night

flowers, moral turpitude,

went upstairs and changed into a different pair of shoes

and a sweater. Jim was pouring himself another glass of port as she came down.

“I won’t be very long,” she said.
/////////

nodded. “Take care of yourself.” She closed the door behind her and went

down through the garden. A carnation struck her hand as she panned. She picked it,

sniffed deeply, and put the stalk in her mouth. “Twenty-seven! Twenty-seven!” She went into the garage, a little house of wood, tucked into the bank at the edge of the road. It was Jim’s car, a present from Carol. She had earned it in the year

following the exhibition, had learned to drive it at an automobile school in London, and had a special low bunk designed for Jim alongside the driver’s seat. The carnation made a crimson

splash against her cheek as she drove out and headed down the hill towards the main road. Up in the cottage Patches “Good ’eavens! Is that

For who dies
The crocus ideally
On life’s playing field
The “never mind” rubbish
All, all fixed

running water
And the proper names,
blood out of courage
to fix
to feel
the stem of air

great, senseless knob
brownies ahead and the clutch. "Twenty-seven!
Twenty-seven!"

sniffed loudly
the car window
listening car had ceased.

A whistle blew shrilly.

Spring Twilight

What are they destroying there, greasy there
All gloated? The fantail
Best and all females
With the beer
On the riding night
The fat and ice nearing to me
In poles She is oinking at the bars
I think so instead mad pulp
The poles borne closer nautical edge
She hips unlikely fail match
Contrasting life.

Lines for the
Great forked wobbling over my shoulder
Sausage pinnacle storm windows
To stroke the drawing room iced nuts
Down the avenue on the box
She gleams my fat
It barks on the prompt avenue noiselessly
Afoul pieces in which her
Massive feet and ankles
The stone partridge expelled mud
Slanting floor of spring

“Actually lined the face with brow
I shall never marry the goose man
I shall never marry the goose man

Tell the avenue
And before he had a chance to they got
And before he chance to get back
Its second dog

The porridge after good-looking woman
Was employed in craze
The visits of fate
The visits of fate
The visits of fate
Twisting the usual of dummy

Downgraded reptile of beans
Tomorrow now the lightened tree
My country
Machines to do work
And match—light his pride
With crow The facts is too important
It seems to me beaver pets
Wait in the barrel is nearer
Perfect bus white man's
Violation of sleep the near thing
Which will remove
Can lice
To accept a little

Sickness, to my valentine in the bulb.

She ran out of the drawing room into the street
A glass girl and I The factors
Of southern states
Would you distinguish for us.

Thoughts of a Young Girl

“It is such a beautiful day I had to write you a letter
From the tower, and to show I’m not mad:
I only slipped on the cake of soap of the air
And drowned in the bathtub of the world.
You were too good to cry much over me.
And now I let you go. Signed, The Dwarf.”

I passed by late in the afternoon
And the smile still played about her lips
As it has for centuries. She always knows
How to be utterly delightful. Oh my daughter,
My sweetheart, daughter of my late employer, prin-
cess,
May you not be long on the way!

The Passive Preacher

the year books
authored the heart bees—
Beers over beads somewhat
broken off from the rest
Quit the tenement
the person slides affect in excrement
on the sides
the janitor and cap, the flat
over the trees
years of patient
on the patient, enamel
sink
washbasin
Please, the pride of the
the three
threaded over, the fluke
the midwinter flood
we were how we liked to
carry it
the blood—full of
and when the mediocrity
cashed in
the mediocrity

fallen for the doom landing swivel
to the next
not to be free of
and the comparison pointed to
the exit light
By frivolous sails
you, that other, and the third one you were become by
and the recent
nuisance
miscreant eating
the last time you on land to
all the old ones
or carried away in marvel
as though the pagoda
and really carried away all
the way shouted at
crimson the day after
you removed the shin
having only forgotten the grave
but permanent as the night's infection
on the needle end
on that needle land

Winter

There is a

I like

however

He didn't want to get that

responsibility?

to worry about made

new cars came out

the

the day

all we've got

don't try to build

walk her

kept saying,

No, we're going

keeps

I think you

except

in

when I think you

It was

moderately are all right is wonderful

Has the

gotten us?

, of apathy

A modern such a fundamental

against the rocks.” At the bottom of the

omen of the bad really gets

gives you a you are to complete

threatens for the but I under

trap of shoulders longer written

won't he anybody

of the artist

(something without very little respect

to these people but I

Please let

with which they are

falling into her hands

is a constant... empty it... I can't stand

with equal parts build over the

pervade

lunch at four

and

event

against the white surface

An international

In the

Part of the

early spring

by the bright

where

deserted weather I had just almost
with woven that smell before you to shut up

That's where

have soaked in it

You fall in love

Whore! Bitch maniac You don't
wounds

to be annoyance and hopelessness

crash after arriving

in New York

Complete marked sophomores younger

sensational our house tonight! had heard

whose is remarkably to catch in him

pitch, floating That day were like those
 he jiggled hap- (he and
 and a clip “Marvelous!”
 Marvelous! Perfect! to offend artists he is
 help-
 in disapproval. But when the “betrayal” music
 And had set the color all by himself
 had quarrelled freely It was very painful for
 both of us
 went out and persuaded him “Sir” has
 enabled him went out of his mind
 paid his bills and
 supervisor of as sometimes borders
 Had he taken percentages
 band stinks. Are still close friends
 It’s always a pleasure Sunday morning Not long

ago I asked
him Ugh! All I ask, as I've and
eventually set out to put on each
Saturday by featuring

on the telephone

Does he take you to a fancy restau-
Showing you the fash-
pretty girls around town?

feet high up Nobody knows Nobody cares
stayed lost to what is to set up your

And the weirdest the efforts explorers

he wrung a good base for it

All good things

recorders

of your parents

men joined

And the dozen others

mindless

, but until

And music schools

And

What began as

Your ten-dollar

—then the very fact jazz is

It is the first age

As a result

French horns

early forties

relative obscurity

the early fifties
playing blues.

But listen a little closer too

legs sleeps on her stomach
fried chicken and the free whiskey

but it, like

adds mystery to having them play
and at best

suspension, the sad

then had begun, the mural

entire cast

they'll repeat all the

the very effort to

sandpipers

Through a wall of crystal

who came here

with good times.” of the early morning, was

coined here

unresolved

of how, when and by whom

a pleasure

too rapidly

into a new key

that time excep-

who came to

moment was past

much happens been told

and written, with all incomprehen

afterward

not how it was

As they themselves knew it

for the lamp

in timeless

the room had

Caught

riots, unemployment

During the time it was happening

The painting,

Suspension of time. The more brilliant. which it
pretends
world on the blast

language and for those in whose lives

at such long range, their imaginations

the dance steps

by tuberculosis

, “they’ll tell you in London’s

who found them most

old, deep bed

old moods

a great

most their own.

A White Paper

And if he thought that
All was foreign—
As, gas and petrol, engine full of seeds, barking to hear the night
The political contaminations

Of what he spoke,
Spotted azaleas to meet him
Sitting next day
The judge, emotions,
The crushed paper heaps.

The Conversions (I)

THE ADZE

The wealthy amateur Grent Wayl invited me to his New York house for an evening's diversion. Welcoming me, he said: The cheek of our Bea! pointing to his niece, Miss Beatrice Fod, who accompanied on the harmonium by her brother Isidore, sang to assembled guests.

At night when you're asleep
Without no pants on
Into your tent I'll creep
Without no pants on

Such nervous speech! Why should he mind, since the song delighted the company? Mr Wayl was aging, aging; but no one would take his words lightly.

He led me upstairs to see one of his new acquisitions. In the library Mr Wayl laid an oblong case of green leather on a white table. Having turned

on a ceiling spotlight to illuminate the case, he opened it. A weapon rested on the brilliant red lining, its smooth handle of ash, its billshaped flat blade of gold.

According to Mr Wayl, the instrument was a ritual adze. The side of the bill we had first beheld was plain, but its reverse was chased with wiry engravings, depicting seven scenes. Six had in common the figure of a longhaired woman with full breasts and a face crosshatched for swarthinness. Mr Wayl suggested that the woman was some heroine or saint, and that the engravings told her life. He looked at me curiously while he said this.

Mr Wayl asked me to interpret the series of engravings.

I began with the leftmost scene, in the point of the blade, where the woman stood naked at the mouth of a stream, with a pile of cowry shells at her feet. The subject hardly suited the life of a saint, but I took it to be a decorative conceit—a quaint medieval mixture of pagan and Christian themes.

To the right of this, the woman stood upon clouds, above a throng of striped men bearing staves shaped like inverted L's. Below the clouds a disc emanated crooked spikes, while lower still people on the earth raised their hands. This clearly seemed to be the saint's manifestation, a descent from heaven. The stavebearing figures were angels with pennons, the spiked disc the rejoicing sun.

In the next engraving the woman held one side of a small wreath; a man in simple vestments held the opposite side. I thought this man must be Christ presenting the saint with a crown of holiness.

The fourth scene showed the woman among battling nights, who were drawn gruesome and pathetic. The saint was surely putting an end to some battle, if not to war itself.

Next, the woman appeared outside a burning grove. Within it there were many tormented figures. She lifted her arms in supplication, as would befit one pleading for the damned.

In the sixth scene the woman knelt in front of a mitred priest who stretched his left hand over her. A fire, which I interpreted as a symbol of divine love, burned in the background. I had no doubt the scene showed the saint blessed by some pope.

The woman did not figure in the last engraving, which I supposed was like the first one decorative. In it four arrows, radii of one small arc, pointed to symbols representing the quarters of the moon. A bag of fish –possibly a Christian reference– hung below.

Mr Wayl had grown impatient during my remarks. He now exclaimed: You're as dumb as is!

Excuse me, sir, I said, if your pleasure was marred.

He was suddenly friendly: No one with purple eyes is stupid. But do you have perfect pitch?

I answered that I had. Leaving the library, he took the adze with him.

PREPARATIONS

As we descended the stairs Mr Wayl stopped me. Listen! Miss Fod was singing.

The second queen was an Amazon
With a terrible spear of brass

Such music! A real old tune – a lass's tenor. You must recognize it.

I listened:

Whistling the devil's salvation
In a girdle of crimson cowries

The three queens made thunder
And snapped stones with a feather
But Black Jack was the smartest crack
And married them all together

There was applause. Mr Wayl had left me listening; he now stood, encircled by the company, next to his niece and nephew. Following his summons I joined them.

Tonight's game, he said, will be a race. The contestants are Bea and Is, whom you all know, and – his hand on my shoulder – this gentleman. The prize will be my antique adze.

Servants entered to draw back the curtains at one side of the drawingroom, then to open the sliding panels of glass that formed the wall behind. We overlooked a greenhouse, whose fragrant heat rose quickly about us, but which we could see little of: it was unlighted except for three parallel bands, about two yards long, that were sunk in its floor near us. These shone dull green.

That is the course, said Mr Wayl. The bands, which are covered with a thin layer of salt slime, are lighted from below so that you can follow the race.

The contestants will be represented by these. He held out his opened cigarette case: in it lay small sticks of tobaccocolored stuff with a tuft of tangled white thread at the end of each.

Worms called zephyrs. They are dried out but alive; moisture will quicken them. On the course, which is wet, they will find in front of them a trail of their habitual food (tiny pharaohs) that will lead them to the finish.

As for the human contestants, they will do more than watch. Each must accompany his worm's advance with an ascending major scale, to be played on one of these instruments that as you doubtless know are named serpents.

Mr Wayl detached three S-ish wooden tubes from a wall panel behind him, fitted their lesser ends with silver mouthpieces, and silently demonstrated a scale

on one of them, progressively unstopping its six fingerholes. The lowest and highest notes were obtained with all the holes stopped.

It is curious, he said, that the holes are divided into groups of three by a length of wood having no proportion to the acoustical distance between the fourth and fifth notes of the scale. Nor do the spaces between the other holes vary with the interval; the holes are apparently bored for the convenience of the fingers. Yet the results are just. Thus with all holes open: *see*? With one: *re*. With three: *fa*. (Since these are C-serpents, the scale names are true.)

At the beginning of the race each contestant will play the lower *do*. The course bands are marked with six indentations; as his worm passes them the contestant must sound the subsequent tones — *re* at the first marker, *mi* at the second, and so on. Without this accompaniment the worm's progress counts for nothing. The race will end with the first high *do*.

Mr Wayl gave us our instruments.

For you, Bea, a fine French example made for the Duchess of Lissixg, who was known as the "Imp Queen" — but I can't remember the Latin for *imp*.

Is will have the favorite serpent of Dericar Ciore, the virtuoso.

And you will have this one. It's wound with masking tape to cover some disturbing scenes painted on it; otherwise it's sound.

Take your places.

We entered the conservatory and knelt, each with a horn, at the end of our appointed bands. Servants knelt next to us, ready with our quiet worms.

Presently the drawingroom lights went out. Mr Wayl said, Begin.

THE RACE

Do: unevenly, the three horns gave the note in the near darkness. The servants placed our worms in the reviving ooze. I watched mine through the greenlighted fringe of the foxtail mat on which I knelt: it lay still. To my left Beatrice Fod urged hers on with whispers, then blew a new note on her serpent—a hesitant semitone.

Patience, said Mr Wayl from the threshold of the drawingroom.

There was a faint white light in the greenhouse, barely more than a drifting phosphorescence. My worm curled, untangling the bunched thread at his tip in thin exploratory tentacles that looked like rapid-flowering vine tendrils. His tan body was now a pale whitish green. Moving he glided quick over the green glass in a curious curve. My eyes were already numb from straining in the dim light when he swerved around the first black marker.

Re I sounded clearly; but Beatrice followed only

with her faltering c sharp. There was laughter from the next room. Turning I saw its cause: an old guest in an overstuffed chair nodded drowsily among the onlookers. Some sort of dark blue light had been made to shine upon him, and against the faint phosphorescent whiteness that still filled the air he appeared to be covered with thick soot. Despite the laughter, he dozed on.

My zephyr slid swiftly forward. It was then I noticed that the path he had taken was marked by a nearly invisible trail of black: a broken irregular line.

Beatrice, in spite of her worm's advance, could not force her intermittent c sharp to the desired *re*. Is Fod as yet made no sound. My worm touched the second marker. I played

Mi, followed by a sigh of wonder from the watchers, while under my eyes the worm's black trail suddenly turned a sullen green. Looking up, I saw on the wall beyond the course's finish the prize adze, flashing red in some beam cast on it from an unseen point. The vision was the color of my inner eye! I nearly forgot to follow my worm; and when I next observed him he was already at the third marker.

Fa: my lips and lungs blared the note out while my eyes fixed the fiery adze: but as I played it dropped abruptly into darkness. Again there was a bustle in the drawingroom. All now looked towards the glass case, placed on a small stand in the center

of the room, where the fifteen pound Slauss sapphire was exposed. The jewel glowed as if illuminated from within: its clarity was now clustered with entwined tenuous red veins. We beheld it thus for a few moments until we heard an unexpected *re* from Is Fod's serpent. As soon as the note was sounded the sapphire turned a translucent black that darkened but did not obscure the red skein.

When my zephyr attained the fourth marker, I made my only mistake of the race. With *fa* I had unstopped the last of the first set of fingerholes. Between it and the next hole lay the abnormal extent of closed tube that Mr Wayl had mentioned. Uncovering the *fa* hole I tried to compensate for its position by slackening my lips; I only succeeded in producing a faltering *fa diesis*.

Every light was extinguished, even the faint green course lights. An unusual darkness suffused the conservatory and the drawingroom. Without color or light, it seemed to have its own thick splendor; and this impression was confirmed when I found that I could still barely discern the line trailed by the advancing worm. I recognized too that this line formed not a haphazard figure, but letters.

I had forgotten to correct my mistake. Only when the silence that followed the sudden darkness had been broken by the embarrassed coughing of Miss Dryrein (Mr Wayl's secretary) did I remember to play.

Sol: the chocolate blackness was at once pierced by a moving ray of yellow light.

I call this Midas's finger, said Mr Wayl. And in fact whatever the beam touched acquired the lustre and massiveness of gold. The sapphire, the harmonium, Mr Wayl, Miss Dryrein, and, one by one, all the guests were subjected to the illusory transformation. Lila Ilab, the Catalan *entreteneuse*, was applauded: her evening gown was made of a tightly coiled spiral of velvet snakes.

The yellow beam was entering the greenhouse when Is Fod sounded his *mi*. The adze again turned a brilliant red. When the yellow ray came to rest on it, its red did not change to gold but deepened in the midst of a golden haze.

The light had proved me right: my worm had left letters in his trail—in the reflected yellow they glowed purple. But I had no time to study them. My worm was at the fifth marker.

La. The adze again disappeared, as well as the moving beam. Instead violet light flooded that drowsy guest whom we had last seen covered with soot. This time the laughter of the other guests roused him, and he opened his eyes, which flashed weirdly, casting thin lilac-colored shafts into the surrounding darkness. A girl cried out, *O Papa, tu m'fais peur!* The old man went back to sleep. The worm letters took on yellowness, while the course was black in the violet glow.

Beatrice uttered a final breath into her serpent: still the same quavering c sharp, dull whiteness guttering for a moment about the violet guest. Balls! We heard a whirring noise and a brief splintering of glass as Beatrice skied her horn through the conservatory roof. Draughts of February air swirled about us.

My *si* was followed at once by Is Fod's *fa*. Pink flooded the course, its hands turning blue, the leech's trail a brighter yellow. At the end of each band a pool of purple light revealed our worms' goal: spider crabs, with ponderous claws and backs overgrown with trailing parasites. Opposite me the crab, seeing his prey so close, waited, while the one facing Is Fod started at a sluggish pace after his. Beatrice's worm had already been eaten.

I watched the eyestalks of the waiting crab lower. Just as the nippers pinched the slender swerving body Mr Wayl said to me, Finish. The high *do* came satisfactorily forth, the air was filled for a moment with a kind of swimming silver, and finally in greenhouse and drawingroom the lights went on. My eyes were tired and blurred. When they cleared, the course bands were empty of light, leeches, and crabs. There only remained the trail of triturated food and slime my lost worm had left, broken marks of a shiny blackness among which I recognized certain letters:

e as no s ex rex noth Syl i

Get rid of that, Mr Wayl said to a servant. To

me: That was not what I meant. I tried to lay down his food so that he would spell... But the result is nothing—fragments.

The race had lasted an hour. Taking my prize with me, I soon left.

FIRST INQUIRIES

I found out why Mr Wayl thought my eyes were purple: he was colorblind. Other remarks of his remained obscure—why, for instance, had he felt that I should recognize the song Beatrice had been singing when we left the library? Throughout the evening Mr Wayl had treated me with singular attention. He had shown me the adze privately. From a large company of guests he had chosen me to compete with the two Fods, known to be his only heirs. He had been pleased, and not at all surprised, that I won the contest. Why?

As Mr Wayl had taken pains to interest me in the images worked on the face of the adze head, I thought it might be rewarding to learn more about them. So a few days after the party I called Miss Dryrein to ask her for any information she had concerning the adze. While she knew next to nothing herself (Mr Wayl had secreted, in a safetybox to which she had no access, what relevant documents there were), she suggested I consult the former owner

of the adze, from whom it had been bought only a few months before.

This person, a minor novelist, at once agreed to see me. I called at his apartment in Bethune Street one evening and there, with a bottle of pisco to maintain us, he told me what he knew.

“THE SORES”

It was on a night in the autumn of last year that I came into possession of the adze. Late one afternoon I had gone to the Plaza, where a cocktail party was being given in connection with the publication of one of my books. Perhaps you've read it —a short novel called *The Sores*? It was dark when I left. I was in an impressionable state; I had drunk a lot, and eaten little, and the hours of party talk had left me agitated. I remember standing on the steps of the hotel when I left, suddenly exalted by the cold air and the illuminated city. A sweet restlessness came over me. I decided to hire one of the carriages drawn up on the Park side of Fifty-ninth Street for a long drive. At first I could not find a willing driver, but one at last agreed to take me out to a Long Island beach. He warned me the trip would last through the night; but I had no objection to that.

We set off, soon crossing the Queensborough

Bridge. I'm not sure where we went after that—I think we started out through Maspeth and later skirted South Ozone. I don't know the city well at all, and in any case I was soon sunk in my dreams. I thought about my childhood, women, and the war, I recited poems and sang through scenes of opera, I thought of the future, especially of trips I would like to make to Morocco, to Sweden, to Afghanistan. Later I thought of the evening I had just passed, and finally of my book. I hadn't really thought of the book in a long time, having been too busy proofing it and discussing it with readers, publishers, and reviewers. Softly shaken in the slow carriage, I renewed my lost enthusiasm.

It concerns three American men who meet in the restaurant of the Copenhagen airport. Their acquaintance begins at the smörgasbord table, where each reveals a taste for bitter pickled onions. All three are waiting for the same flight, a departure for San Francisco across the Arctic Sea. At first they would seem to have nothing more in common. One of them, Jacob Pendastrava, is a sociologist, recently engaged on an inquiry into the variables of joy. Pownoll Toker Williaus is vicepresident of a company that manufactures foundation garments, the Press-You-Nigh Stays. Inc. Noah La Vas, the youngest of the three, is an engineer whose specialty is the slowing of high winds. He has recently invented a kind of inverted pendulum which, projected into a wind-

channel by powerful hydraulic springs, tends to set up restraining crosscurrents.

Their first conversation lags. Williaus hums nervously to fill the silence. La Vas in surprise recognizes the tune: Why that's *Wehe Wintgen Wehe!* What! says Williaus, You mean . . . This is too good to be true, adds Pendastrava. They have found a common enthusiasm; they are all three amateurs of old German music. A jubilant discussion of Sweelink, Schein and Schütz, illustrated with musical examples, lasts until boarding time and through the first hours of flight.

When fatigue overcomes the majority of the passengers (very late in the night, for since it is June the plane is flying in sunlight), the three men, respecting the sleep of their fellow travellers, withdraw to the lounge in the tail of the plane. They too are tired, and they decide to play cards for a while. Pendastrava teaches his friends an antique form of cribbage. They have played for about an hour, and Williaus has just completed his fifteen with a jack of spades, when the cards and markers suddenly swarm in the air around them. Then they themselves are pitched from their chairs as the plane falls. The crash occurs; they find themselves battered but alive. La Vas soon succeeds in getting outside. He finds that the tail section of the plane, broken off from the rest of the fuselage, is resting on a flat expanse of ice. Before him there is a huge hole of black

water. There is no sign of any other survivor or wreckage.

Williaus joins La Vas, and the two of them help Pendastrava, whose left leg is broken, down on to the ice. Making him as comfortable as possible, they return to the wreck to see what they can salvage. As the luggage is stored at the very tailend of the plane, they find plenty of clothes, and also a closetful of blankets. But the galley and its stores, located behind the pilot's cabin, are lost. All the food they can find is a half dozen cans and pots of dainties, souvenirs of tourists homeward bound: Strasburg patty, smoked eel, sweetbreads in wine, pickled mushrooms, an Edam cheese, and a bottle of *grappa*. From the remaining contents of the luggage, La Vas and Williaus take several tubes of aspirin, a sheathknife, a compass, and a pistol (a small .30 calibre automatic) with two boxes of cartridges.

The next concern of the two men is Pendastrava's leg. La Vas proves his ingenuity by disassembling and reshaping the metal tubes out of which the lounge furniture is made. From them, with the aid of belts and wire, he constructs a huge splint. Shaped like a U with one side greater than the other, this splint, fitted into the groin and armpit of the injured man, not only keeps his leg rigid but also serves as a fixed crutch, enabling him to stand without having his leg touch the ground or take his body's weight.

Everything to be taken from the plane is brought

out, for the wrecked tail is slowly sinking through the ice. The three men consider their situation. They decide that since a search will surely be made to discover the fate of their plane, they should stay next to the wreck, where they have a better chance of being seen from the air, until it sinks. On the other hand, they decide to prepare for the worst, that is, for a long trek southward over the ice in case they are not soon rescued. Thus the small amount of food at their disposal is to be severely rationed, and a part, the can of eel, set aside for use as fish-bait. Seawater is to be drunk from the start to avoid the harmful effects it might have if taken after prolonged thirst.

Most of the day has passed. Williaus spends the early evening preparing a tent out of blankets. La Vas fishes in the hole made by the sunken plane, but has no luck. The morale of the men is good, tired as they are. Only Pendastrava shows any signs of despondency—his leg has been hurting him considerably. Even he becomes cheerful after a swallow of *grappa*. The three men sing *Ein fester Burg ist unser Gott*, in Schütz's harmonisation. They feel no touch of loneliness in that lifeless tract of raw whiteness, but sleep well through the sunny night, La Vas and Williaus taking turns to watch.

The morning of the next day passes without event. The weather is bright and mild. La Vas explores the vicinity of their camp, finding nothing.

Williaus fishes for several hours without success. Pendastrava rests; his leg bothers him less.

At midday a fire of sorts is made, and the can of sweetbreads is heated and half eaten.

During the afternoon an airplane, flying at about a thousand feet, passes several miles to the north of them. Of the many search planes sent out, this is the only one the survivors ever see.

The following day Pendastrava makes his first attempt to walk, but is obliged to give up after a few steps. His general condition has nonetheless improved.

On the afternoon of the fifth day the tail wreckage disappears. The hole it leaves is separated from the larger one caused by the crash by only a few feet; the two holes soon become one. The men decide to abandon their efforts to catch fish, preserving their bait for richer waters.

The next day, the sixth, the pot of gooseliver patty is opened, the mushrooms, as well as the sweetbreads, having been finished. Pendastrava, who is exhausted by the few steps he has managed to take earlier in the day, vomits the small share of patty he swallows. This causes the first break in morale since the crash: La Vas loses his temper and berates Pendastrava for his weakness and stupidity. Pendastrava answers feebly but bitterly.

In the course of the afternoon Williaus tries to reconcile his companions. He evidently succeeds. That night, however, at the hour when the three

men usually sang together, Pendastrava refuses to join them. His excuse is that he cares too much for the music, which requires four voices, to like hearing it botched by three. But it is his silence that makes the singing impossible: La Vas and Williaus soon give up their sad duet. For the first time the three find the lifeless silence heavy, and the night sun sharp. All sleep little.

Matters do not improve next morning. A running argument begins between La Vas and the other men. La Vas insists that they start southward at once since a week has already passed and the efforts to find them have probably been abandoned: they must cover ground while they still have some food. The others feel that the departure must be postponed as long as possible so that Pendastrava's injured leg may heal—otherwise, how can they make any worthwhile progress?

The discussion is interminable and pointless. The three men are starting to get weak, not so much from lack of nourishment as from exposure. The glare of ice and sun is wrecking their eyes, and making them suffer almost uninterrupted headaches. The consumption of seawater, minimal but constant, has also had its effect in the pain and cramp that molest their bowels. They are no longer reasonable and only La Vas has much energy for facing the problems of their predicament. The other two—especially Pendastrava—prefer to take refuge in a lethargic hope of rescue.

The senseless argument immobilizes the survivors. Scoring small points in the harangues becomes their main preoccupation, each man clinging to his point of view in spite of fact or need. La Vas is absurdly brutal during the first days of the argument, when Pendastrava's leg is in truth unfit for a day's march; while to safeguard the importance of his injury, the latter will not exercise his leg even when he feels capable of doing so. Williaus, in his role of nurse and protector, seconds this passivity.

It is not until six more days have passed that the three men break camp and start south. There is practically no more food: they have finished the eel, except for two slivers kept as bait, and nearly half the Edam cheese.

Nevertheless the departure is a boon for their spirits. Pendastrava is heroic in his efforts to advance, while the other two work in relay to help him and, during the rests, to take care of him. By evening they have advanced seven miles, according to La Vas's estimate. Although they are too tired to speak much, a new fellowship unites them.

The following day, the fifteenth after the crash, Pendastrava's condition permits them to cover only about five miles. A long rest is salutary: a march of eight miles is made the next day, ten the day after that, and this average is kept up for two days more. The travellers observe a few seabirds, too distant to shoot at.

On the morning of the twentieth day, Pendastrava takes a hard fall on the ice. His leg hurts him terribly when he resumes his march. He is obliged to rest every two or three minutes and can advance only several hundred yards in an hour. The day's march is of less than three miles, only one mile having been covered after his fall.

Pendastrava is worse the next morning: his leg is swollen and sore. Even helped by his companions he is hardly able to walk at all, and the other men are far too weak to carry him. They barely advance a mile in nine hours. By that time the men are frantic with fatigue and despair. Pendastrava is in continual pain. He refuses to speak to the others.

During the night Pendrastrava filches and eats the remaining morsel of cheese. His act is discovered at noon the next day, after five hours of painful meagre progress. La Vas begins kicking the prostrate Pendastrava. When Williaus intervenes, La Vas knocks him down.

In the middle of the afternoon, during a prolonged rest, La Vas takes Williaus aside. He apologizes for having struck him, and goes on to give his view of their predicament: the only way out is to abandon Pendastrava. With him they will starve; without him, there is a chance that the two of them will reach the edge of the Arctic basin where they will find a plenty of fish and birds. Since it is inhuman to leave Pendastrava to die slowly, he should be shot. La Vas

offers to do this, and asks Williaus to give him the pistol. Williaus refuses, wishing to think over the other's plan.

The march is resumed. When it is his turn to help Pendastrava, Williaus lets La Vas go a ways ahead of them. He then tells Pendastrava of La Vas's plan. Pendastrava demands the gun, and Williaus gives it to him. The sun is low, and a soft wind rises.

Williaus calls La Vas to take his turn with the injured man. Setting Pendastrava down on the ice, Williaus draws a few steps away, and stands turned away from the others. He hears La Vas cry out and looking around sees that Pendastrava is aiming the gun not at La Vas, but at him. La Vas runs slowly towards Pendastrava; Williaus screams; Pendastrava aims but holds his fire. When Pendastrava finally becomes aware of La Vas's approach, he turns the pistol towards him and shoots him through the chest. The stricken man falls on Pendastrava. Williaus's terror of Pendastrava changes to infinite anger and he runs whimpering to punish him. The latter is pinned beneath the dying La Vas and cannot even speak. Williaus strikes and scratches at his face. At last, seeing the gun lying on the ice where it has slid from Pendastrava's hand, he crawls to get it and returns to strike Pendastrava repeatedly in the face with the gun butt. Pendastrava struggles helplessly, trapped under La Vas's body. He is soon killed by the blows.

Shaking and exhausted, Williaus collapses on the ice near the two bodies. He lies there for almost three hours. He cannot find the strength to decide to get up. When he finally does, he leaves without looking at the others, keeping only his blankets and the pistol.

He does not rest until late that night. From now on he pays no more attention to the time of day, but walks when he can and rests when he must. He rests very often. He is now so weak that he cannot advance more than four or five miles a day. Since he has left the compass in La Vas's pocket, his progress south is even slower than this.

Twentyfive days have passed since the plane crash. Williaus talks to himself silently as he walks. He talks also (but silently still) to others. Curiously enough -he apologizes for his lapse- he cannot pronounce certain words, those that end in -ion. At first he can pronounce all their syllables except the last. Consternat, ambit -his groping tongue fails. Later he has difficulty pronouncing any part of such words. He tries pretending to think of other words and his mind then comes close to filling the hiatus. But when he springs towards the forgotten word there is only a ridiculous fragment -vat, sump- or a void.

He has seen birds more frequently, although only singly. He decides to start trying to shoot them. He notices that one of the birds seems to be following

him — not only following but drawing closer with each succeeding hour. It is a rather large bird, of a sooty blue, which he recognizes as a noddy—the silly bird that is afraid of nothing. He cannot understand how this bird could have come so far north. He feels a strange hope seeing it.

When the bird is hovering about ten yards over his head, Williaus begins shooting at it. He misses repeatedly. The bird is not frightened and continues its daylong descent.

Williaus leaves off shooting at the bird when it is a few feet from him. Not only are his shots useless, but the noddy appears like an angelic companion to him. The bird flies lower and lower, the undersides of its wings unnaturally white.

On the morning of the twentyseventh day the white-sooty wings brush Williaus's face. He thinks: The foolish noddy, unafraid of man. The bird rises a little in the air only to cover his face again with its wings. He is snowblind.

Williaus does not at first understand what has happened to him. He walks through universal whiteness until he falls. After that he crawls for a while.

The noddy has not left him, but hovers in his unblinded mind. The bird darkens, the curious whiteness of its wings gathers to a ball in its beak, a quartzlike globe. An amethyst pupil completes the eye, which regards Williaus inquiringly but without much emotion. Then it begins to sing. (Williaus can

tell it is the eye singing by the listening aspect of the bird.) It sings such lines as:

O Johnny O Johnny O

At the end of each song the noddy flies out of sight for a moment, bearing the eye, but soon comes back.

After a while Williaus asks if the eye could not sing an old song. The eye, with a look of surprise, consents to render *Come away, come sweet love*. But it insists on preceding each return to the old music with several popular songs.

By the end of the twentyeighth day Williaus has given himself over to death. The lustrous voice fades. At a certain moment he becomes aware of a being close to him. He calls out, but hears only a rubbery clatter. Pulling the glove from his right hand, he stretches it towards the sound: bones and silky whiskers, and a sweet whine. A new soft clatter, and the being's body moves against him. The seal puts his head on Williaus's lap who strokes it tenderly.

From time to time the seal moves away but usually Williaus can follow the flapping of its feet, or its short grunts. Once it goes far away but after a long hour returns. Williaus caresses it with happy relief. So doing he finds that the seal's smooth pelisse is rent with sores. His fingers explore the open wounds, the animal trembles at this touching.

Williaus weeps, repeating Poor Roly, poor Roly, soothing its head. He weeps obliviously over the wet soft sores.

When the seal next starts to move away, Williaus pleads with it to stay. He cannot think how to keep it by him. Then remembering that music is attractive to seals, he begins to sing:

The first queen was a farmer's girl
With hair as yellow as hay,
She slept one night with the emperor
The emperor died next day

The third queen was a heathen
The fairest of all houris,
She danced for the devil's salva

Vat
La lala

Williaus's body was carried by icedrift to the nearby edge of the polar pack, and thence, the ice breaking up, floated southward into the Atlantic on an iceberg. At summer's end it was observed by the passengers of Mr Leigh Smith's yacht *Diana*. The body, recovered, was brought to Canada aboard that ship, and there Williaus's family took charge of it, returning with it to Los Angeles where the remains were burned.

GYPSIES

A soothing rush of waves had washed through the close of my recital. It was past midnight when the carriage stopped at the beach.

Someone outside opened the carriage door and the beam of a flashlight entered. There was laughter from many men and women: I had been smoking a ninetyfivecent footlong cigar, and the light discovered me in a heap of smoke.

Such ash! said the man with the flashlight. My suit was thoroughly sprinkled with cigar droppings.

A sable silvered.

A silver Stewart?

Royally bearded! I said, feeling my stubbled chin.

Did you say: beheaded?

Purged by pickled hominy!

My questioner, helping me to the ground, laughed delightedly at my last answer. Taking my arm he led me towards the nearest of the campfires burning along the beach. We passed through a score of watching gypsies.

When we had reached the fire my questioner shined his light on a trail of ashes pointing to my carriage. We were expecting you, he said, by this sign of the wind.

My polite smile revealed my skepticism. I have never seen such indignation. Protests from all sides

persuaded me to submit to an experiment, although I feared it would only bring new embarrassment.

From somewhere beyond the firelight a gypsy girl trundled a strange machine. It was made of two large flared cones of corrugated iron set one above the other. The lower one's base rested close to the ground on a ring of free wheels. The upper cone, joined to the lower by a tube in a way allowing each to revolve independantly, was set at right angles to the first, its base, shut with a flat metal disc, facing outwards: it looked like the horn of some outsize Edison phonograph. The machine must have been seven feet high, and the diameter of the cones at their bases four feet; the short tube connecting them was only three inches thick at its narrowest point.

After unlocking three hooks on its surface, the girl swung out a large section of the lower cone together with the corresponding arc of the wheelring, and the machine was then pushed into position over the campfire, raked into a compact blazing heap of coals. During the moment the cone was open, I saw that its inner surface was covered with a spiral of closeset blackened vanes.

While the machine was being fetched, several gypsy men had dug a shallow circular ditch around the fire, afterwards wetting it with buckets of seawater. The ring of wheels now rested in this trough of relatively firm sand.

All now drew back to a distance of ten yards from the fire, except for the girl who had fetched the machine. Turning the upper cone towards the sea, from which a steady wind blew, she removed the disc that sealed its base, and withdrew at once to the circle of watchers. The upper cone, which was evidently hollow, swung slightly to left and right before settling into place facing the wind. Slowly at first, the lower cone began to spin on its ring of wheels. A harsh whispering noise started, thickening and rising with the pace of the cone's gyration.

When the lower cone had reached a speed I would not have thought possible, so pronounced that its wheels had become a blur (it is true that the only light was that of the hidden fire), the machine's movements changed. The upper cone, previously immobile, started to revolve as the lower cone slowed. In a few seconds their roles had been reversed, the lower cone remaining still while the upper whirled violently. But I had barely accustomed myself to this transformation when with a grinding crack all motion stopped, and the upper cone, which had come to its abrupt halt facing me, spouted a dazzling stream of coals. These when they fell rested for the merest instant in bright continuous lines; I read the word THESAURUS. At once the coals began to wink out, hissing damply. Five seconds after having seen the word I began doubting my eyes, confronted as I

now was with only scattered embers, bearing as much resemblance to that word as a constellation to the legendary figures it portrays.

A shout from the gypsies followed the word's appearance. I was ready enough to admit my error; but nobody was thinking any longer of that argument. Instead I was told that I must enter a contest with the leading men of the community. Since everyone was immediately busy preparing for this event, I was obliged to accept—especially as I had put myself so completely in the wrong.

I learned that the stake in the game was to be an extraordinary heirloom—in fact the treasure signified by “thesaurus”—but I was not yet told what it was. First of all I was to witness a special dance, a preliminary meant to emphasize the ritual character of the game.

We formed a new circle around the campfire. Soon music began. A crank victrola played the worn record of an old popular song. This music had a curious complement. Three women held strips of wetted white cloth and snapped them in turn, thus making a series of resounding retorts that possessed a certain rough element of pitch. The three strips were of unequal length: the middlesize one was only slightly longer than the shortest strip, while the longest was nearly its double. At long intervals that seemed to have no connection with the recorded music, the women would flick their cloths in rapid

succession: first that of middle length, then the longest, finally the shortest.

Presently the dancers appeared – a handsome couple wearing only bathing suits, shaking with cold. The man crouched on the ground. The woman performed a solo during which she strewed over her partner bands of charred newspaper from a basket placed nearby. Once she had thoroughly covered the man and the ground around him, the woman withdrew. The man soon began to lift himself up. As he tried to shake off the papers, however, he became more and more entangled in them. I saw after a moment how the effect was achieved. A net had been laid on the spot where he had squatted, concealed by a light covering of sand, and he had picked it up when he rose. The strands of the net, furthermore, must have been dipped in a strong glue, for the papers stuck to them firmly. After many elegant contorsions, the dancer, wrapped from head to toe in a shroud of newsprint, fell on the sand as if dead. The music's close marked the end of the dance.

It was then that my questioner with the flashlight – who turned out to be a chief – showed me the stake the gypsies had put up for our game. It was nothing other than the “adze”, as they called it – of course I pointed out that it wasn't an adze at all but a kind of shorthanded halberd, or a large billhook. While they granted that it rather resembled such

instruments, they insisted that it was an adze, and no ordinary one. The chief explained that the pictures engraved on its head portrayed the life of some ancient wonderqueen of theirs, from her birth to her burning. Then he and several other men discussed the last scene shown on it —the one with moon, arrows, and fish— which they couldn't understand, much less agree on.

Next I was asked to put up *my* stake. I was at a loss. A hundred times the money I was carrying would not have bought the adze's gold, and then there was its symbolic value, which I gathered was the gypsies' paramount reason for offering it up to chance. At last, reluctantly, I drew from my overcoat pocket my beloved dog Limnise and announced my willingness to risk him. This extraordinary animal, bought three years previously at a secondhand dog store on the Left Bank, was only six inches long and weighed only six ounces fed. But his brain, a marvel of nature, was equal to that of any Alsatian shepherd. When I had bought him, a veteran circus roustabout had already trained him to perform such feats as measuring all distances from a foot to a mile with a margin of error of only one sixteenth of an inch.

My hosts were delighted with Limnise, and so the game finally started. It was played at another fire, over which a twentyfive gallon vat of water had been set to boil on a castiron tripod. The boiling

water was funnelled from a spigot into terracotta jars that, excepting a small hole left for this purpose, were entirely closed. The filled jars, borne on wooden trays by gypsy girls, were passed in turn to the contestants who took them in their bare hands. Before setting his jar down, the contestant had to describe the scene molded on its top. If he dropped a jar, or put it on the ground without giving a fitting description, he was out of the game. When only two players remained, this procedure ended. Instead, the finalists joined in a kind of rhetorical contest, explaining the transcendant meaning of the scenes already described.

I was shown a sample jar top. Its picture was the same as the second one of the adze. The trick, the chief told me, is to use the fewest words possible, without sacrificing good usage or leaving out any part of the picture. In this case you might say, The lightningpucked thundergaming hockeyists felled, our queen on cloud is admired.

I promised to do my best.

Looking back, I am sure that at least part of the game was prepared. Before I had had five turns a dozen contestants —all but the chief and I— had managed either to drop their jars or to stutter unnaturally when their turn came. I can't remember half of what they did say, so I shall limit myself to us two finalists. I wasn't able, of course, to see the chief's jars: I can only report his words.

It was he who opened the game, saying of the first jar: A mast bears fruit for shipwrecked travellers.

I was nearly eliminated at my first turn. When I took the offered jar, in spite of all my inner preparations, its boiling heat blinded me. My vision fortunately cleared quickly enough to distinguish the crudely made image: a child was curled up, as if in the womb, within a circle on whose outer edge grew trees, shrubs and crops, all on fire. I said: The old world, burning, heralds the new one to be born.

The dialogue continued thus:

The chief: For gay gangs crossing, the sea's a velvet field.

Of a group of nine men on their knees, clubs laid aside, I said, Victorious Yankees pray for humility.

The chief: From the dead god's eye swarm fat swine.

My next scene showed two men, one of them looking in amazement at the other, who was chiselling at the bust of an old man set in the middle of a fence. I said of it: Confounding Brunelleschi, Donatello carves a venerable God from a fencepost.

The chief: Cool drink in hand, Somerset Maugham is gently toothdrilled. (I objected to "toothdrilled" but was overruled.)

Next I had to describe a picture in the upper half of which a pianist with fluttering hair regarded

a cross, while below a plump bearded man engaged in tourney with an opponent in sidewhiskers and velvet clothes. My description was: Brahms and Wagner joust for fame, but Liszt plays only for Jesus.

The chief: Joyous giants make, of bankcolumns, flutes.

And I, considering a prisoner who sang and played a mandolin while his guard stood by with ready whip, concluded: The punished liar sings a new song of truth.

The chief and I were now the only contestants, and we entered the final period of the game—the rhetorical summary of our descriptions. The chief spoke first:

The mast, and the flutes, the sea, the tooth, the eye, the eye, the tooth, the sea, the flutes, the mast: in in these there five all symbols it's we see have you a so glimpse meant into nicely the quite world here that but we Square all Washington yearn around for, of that anarchists paradise pleasant on the earth to of happens which as all literature prophets such from of Isaiah readers to to Vergil familiar to conception you a and bankcolumns me of have out sung —flutes that the world care in medical which painless pain and and comfortable fear as have well been as banished, luxurious where free plenty of is picture insured touching and a when tooth we Maugham's will Mr finally mention have to the forgot opportunity I to kaput promote world a old demo-

cratic the interest i. e. in god the dead fine
the arts. Of is knowledge it is not that fitting
eye that the this from new course age of should
symbolically be proceeding first home heralded
brought by easily the be miracle to that bacon saved
the those by classic indicated victims as of notably
pity, eat travellers to wrecked plenty on also a but
barren all shore? To but available soon be plights
advantages like negativistic theirs these will will
have only been not forever foidermore banished—
traverse the to sea desiring itself tread will baby lose
merest its the periculousness, for being velvet trans-
formed comfy to soft soft to comfy transformed
velvet being for periculousness the its merest lose
baby will tread itself desiring sea to the traverse.
Banished foidermore forever –but enough! Glimpse
so a you have see we it's symbols all five there, in
the mast, the sea, the eye, the tooth, and the flutes!

There was considerable applause. In turn I rose
to speak:

Eak! ay! irth! ine! ees! ost! er! ire! ird!
inel ew!

ladies gentlemen, tongue phrases. rhetoric day.
man's glory earth, birth –birth goodness, light nat-
ure. men arms, knees strength humility's. sculptor
glory god fencepost. tones flesh hands register. just-
ice, liar (word) rack whip fire music bird. wonders
seas swine, mercy wisdom flame— world.

is to wrap speak; say is to say keep; shown, tell

—began to shine; laid, fell, prayed be; felt was
made spring; knew to stir confined; was (murdered)
forced to bear to sing; is bring to view; is;

weak another come stranger divine burning all
brave most mere weak upper merciful wretched
twisted fair true velvet milling blessed divine such
new greater,

and and but when and, when and and or, or but
or but and,

in for on of, of to from with, to with with,

a the the, the the a th', the a the, the,

I me you, I you he, he he I,

plainly briefly there up down, but even not like
not,

my my, their their, their his, his his,

let, have been, shall, had, was,

what, what, who, that,

which?

—That I leave to you.

Cheers rose about the fire at my last words. There
was no question as to who was the winner, and the
chief immediately congratulated me.

It is a new triumph, he said, of analytical poetry
over descriptive prose. This reassured me — I was
afraid my couplets might have passed unnoticed.

Dawn had begun to lighten the smoky beach
when I started back to New York, with the awarded
adze on my lap tied up in *Mirror* and string. Although
I had won, it had been necessary for me to abandon

my dog—evidently the stakes are exchanged in such cases, there being, according to those people, no such thing as a winner. So, giving him a last center slice of his favorite *filet mignon*, I said goodbye to Limnise. It was the only bad moment of that diverting and exhausting night.

Several months later I sold the adze to Wayl, who had shown extraordinary interest in it, finally offering me more money than I could refuse.

Two o'clock in the morning had struck when the novelist finished his story. Tired, I suggested we meet another time to talk about the adze itself, and thanking him for his kindness, left.

Poem

To be idiomatic in a vacuum,
it is a shining thing! I

see it, it's like being inside
a bird. Where do you live,

are you sick?
I am breathing the pure sphere

of loneliness and it is sating.
Do you know young René Rilke?

He is a rose, he is together, all
together, like a wind tunnel,

and the rest of us are testing
our wings, our straining struts.

Overlooking the River

Clouds or cloudbursts, the haze
reaching for Afghanistan-by-the-Sea,
the willowing weathers for. Now the sighs
darting into a tender fracas leeward and lee

of the trembling bosky shore.

When to the fameless currents of the subway
leathern angels drop their fingers where
they fall scuttling redly, cross Broadway,

and disappear into the Park,
the oar juts fleshily out dripping with
silver, singing its arietta of planks and rock,
while the bracing wind makes a monolith

of my always pushing westward,
The falling water of the starry signs
seeks out that love a child first did in Sherwood
Forest, with rogues, by the mill's pouring turbines.

East River

Homes of aviators suddenly mounting,
General Vivre is poking his fishing rod
into the reeds, murmuring salaciously
“Two, three times your courage hut rises”.

Kept necessitates beautiful, final, a sum
shaking night of its vines and its pimps,
expanding their clarity over the streets
in rainy asters, baguettes, evil wishes
flickering their evil wishes on the vendors.

A swallow passes along the kid-strewn sigh
and rents a house, intending to study voice;
catch his graveness as he teases the kelp!
She parks her purse on the bottom of the river,
a plant of coins and promises to leave.

I understand the song when it screams
and I hear the scream when it sighs,

with my flag I dive into the Hudson
and come up in a deep river near Poughkeepsie,

where is General Vivre living now
that the war is dead and has flagged us?

Ducal Days

A rending. Red whispers. The sailboat dives
upon the viaduct, barely catches
an infant stolen in the hospitals.
Mother is served under the velvet bridge

for the sixth time at the end of the continent.
When shall your golden eyelashes waltz down
round your excellent shoulders on the half past six?
I want to fell your ankles and the water a-keen,

the glancing bubbles of those breaths.
Then passing; so articulate clearly:
“There’s the cast-off grillwork of your smile,
which in a better world held down your heart.”

Locarno

to James Schuyler

Bushes toss on the crowded terrace
like a piano's thunderous onslaught
falls from the cuff, sentimental twilight
of horns. "You saw me last later with kohl
on my lids, you said hello, I know you did.
The next day the skiing instructor cut me.
I had overheard you telling Dorabella and Jo
he wrote. Then be so kind as to cut my heart out
of the doily in the Turkish Ambassadors's V neck.

Alma." And when certain octaves are struck
childhood rears up on its hind legs, billy club
in lob-lolly careening leaden and fat. Blue
tissue nipples like a sunrise in Yokosuka. I
went to the Admiralty, those buggars, with
a complaint
that Americans are the ones who are different. Did
I ever feel the traitor, Jesus, my old copperhead;
you know, Miss, I never done delivered no baby
before.

The Opera

Free to suffer speechful constraint
to be whipped by mysterious winds
to find your dear friend's smiling eye
dropping like a window on your neck
its diamonds.

I am wondering if you remember her
as a young girl with several minor operations
walking her dog and humming the poor reindeer
into the glasses of silver intoxicating sighs
a very sad dress.

There will never be a moment more like it
when the heart sights its whalespout into the throat
and tears like Alps go up austere elevators
into which blue-you never quite disappears
though again you try to try.

House

They took the cardboard box and covered it with plaster, dry among the evergreens. Thinking of the centuries of worship that went into those cathedrals built (is it possible to regret that first whiteness of construction, so fragile and above the earth?) like a solid cloud that won't plunge into the surging aquamarine, they swept the pipes into a large container to be carted away by horsepower. And then the surrounding hills looked beautiful in the fading winter, although the pipes had been rusted veins of a structure partially decorated by leaves and full of sweetness. They preferred the hills, "spaciousness" they said, and "ease". Yet there were the horses at night, storming across the porch of the cement house, and there were crickets and thistles heaving, full of heart, so prudently habituated.

Failures of Spring

I'm getting rather Lorcaesque lately
and I don't like it.

Better if my poetry were,
instead of my lives. So many aspects of a star,

the Rudolph Valentino of sentimental reaction
to dives and crumby ex-jazz-hangouts.

I
put on my sheik's outfit and sit down
at the pianola,

like when I first discovered
aspirin.

And I shall never make my LORCAESCAS
into an opera. I don't write opera.

So hot,
so hot the night my world
is trying to send up
its observation satellite.

*Adieu to Norman,
Bonjour to Joan and Jean-Paul*

It is 12:10 in New York and I am wondering
if I will finish this in time to meet Norman for lunch
ah lunch! I think I am going crazy
what with my terrible hangover and the weekend
coming up
at excitement-prone Kenneth Koch's
I wish I were staying in town and working on my
poems
at Joan's studio for a new book by Grove Press
which they will probably not print
but it is good to be several floors up in the dead
of night
wondering whether you are any good or not
and the only decision you can make is that you did it

yesterday I looked up the rue Frémicourt on a map
and was happy to find it like a bird
flying over Paris et ses environs
which unfortunately did not include Seine-et-Oise
which I don't know
as well as a number of other things

and Allen is back talking about got a lot
and Peter is back not talking very much
and Joe has a cold and is not coming to Kenneth's
although he is coming to lunch with Norman
I suspect he is making a distinction
well, who isn't

I wish I were reeling around Paris
instead of reeling around New York
I wish I weren't reeling at all
it is Spring the ice has melted the Ricard is being
poured
we are all happy and young and toothless
it is the same as old age
the only thing to do is simply continue
is that simple
yes, it is simple because it is the only thing to do
can you do it
yes, you can because it is the only thing to do
blue light over the Bois de Boulogne it continues
the Seine continues
the Louvre stays open it continues it hardly closes
at all
the Bar américain continues to be French
de Gaulle continues to be Algerian as does
Camus
Shirley Goldfarb continues to be Shirley Goldfarb
and Jane Hazan continues to be Jane Freilicher (I
think!)

and Irving Sandler continues to be the balayeur des
artistes
and so do I (sometimes I think I'm "in love" with
painting)
and surely the Piscine Deligny continues to have
water in it
and the Flore continues to have tables and news-
papers and people under them
and surely we shall not continue to be unhappy
we shall be happy
but we shall continue to be ourselves everything
continues to be possible
René Char, Pierre Reverdy, Samuel Beckett it is
possible isn't it
I love Reverdy for saying yes, though I don't
believe it

*Far from the Porte des Lilas
and the Rue Pergolese*

to Joan Mitchell

Ah Joan! there
you are
surrounded by paintings
as in another century you would be wearing lipstick
(which you wear at night to be oldfashioned, of it!
with it! out!)

and the danger of being Proustian
and the danger of being Pasternakesque
and the cops outside the BALAJO frisking Algerians
who'd been quietly playing "surf" with their
knuckles

gee, if I don't stop being so futuristic Elsa Triolet
will be after me!

a dream of immense sadness peers through me
as if I were an action poem that couldn't write
and I am leaving for another continent which is the
same as this one
goodby

From "Mediterranean Cities"

TRASTEVERE * A DEDICATION

Dear head to one side, in summer dusk, Olga
On her terrace waters potted azaleas
Thoughts of friends, their fine successes, their failures
Greek reliefs, Russian poets, all water with her;
The plants rejoice; across the street, the high wall
Reaches the decayed park of a long dead Pope
Urchins stole the sphinx near the fence up the hill
Where woods grow thick, sold it to a Yank I hope;
Now young priests smoke at the basin, by blurred
 sea-gods
Above them rises a hairy thicket of palms
That male in their joint green dusk yield Rome the
 odds
Returning with the night into primeval realms
As laughing Olga, feeding through the window
 cat-shadows
Then reading, then sinking into slumber, too does

VENICE

She opens with the gondola's floated gloze
Lapping along the marble, the stir of swill
Open to night sky like in tenement hallways
The footfalls, and middream a bargeman's lone call;
Sideways leading to her green, like black, like copper
Like eyes, on tide-lifted sewers and façades
Festooning people, barges a-sway for supper
Under hunched bridges, above enclosed pink walls;
And crumbling sinks like a blond savory arm
Fleshed, a curled swimmer's pale belly that presses
And loosens, and moist calves, then while the charm
Subsides, Venice secrets pleases, caresses;
The water –like walking of women, of men
The hoarse low voices echo from water again

VILLA D'ESTE

Beneath me this dark garden plunges, buoyant
Drops through the trees to basins furtive below
Under me wobbles the tip of a mast-thick fountain
I laugh and run down; the fat trunks heavily grow;
Then cypress, ilex rise reflected immense
Melancholy, and the great fount thrusts forceful
Tiny, their seclusion perches over the plains
For plains billow far below toward Rome remorseful;
But rilling streams draw me back in, up above
To the spurt, dribble, gush, sheath of secret water
Plash, and droves of Italians childish as love
Laughing, taking pictures of laughter, of water
Discovering new fountlets; so dense, so dark
Single on a desert mountain drips the locked park

OLÉVANO ROMANO

Samnite, such a high hilltown made Romans cross;
Viewed below, April ledges of grape or rye
Slim green, deeper green in the valley, and a voice
Chanting on the mountainside; Dante woke too
To dawn of rain, thrush, of farmers' and beasts'
tread

Leaving the cold alleys tight about the keep
Driven diurnally from the mountainhead
Down to farm, at dusk resorbed upward to sleep;
They sleep close; clouds like hounds coil on the
mountaintops

And the bare Spring, girl-like, Olympian hunter
Sharp for our smell, shudders; so old the night drops
While people lie flaccid and covered grunterns
Godless; a dream stirs one, she scents them again
And they flee like hares though wide delight and
close pain

SANT'ANGELO D'ISCHIA

Wasps between my bare toes crawl and tickle; black
Sparkles sand on a white beach; ravines gape wide
Pastel-hued twist into a bare mountain's back
To boiling springs; emblems of earth's age are displayed;

At a distant end of beach white arcs piled
Windows, and in the sea a dead pyramid washed
As if in the whole world few people had survived
And man's sweetness had survived a grandeur extinguished;

Wonders of senility; I watch astonished
The old hermit poke with a stick the blond lame boy
Speaking obscenities, smiling weird and ravished
Who came from New York to die twenty years ago;
So at a wild farmer's cave we pour wine together
On a beach, four males in a brilliant weather

POSITANO

In the sky the mountain hunches blindly forward
Hugely falling crowds close, and a caverned head
Grovels between foam; from blackened lips of shore
Grinding, the waves with snake eyes forever evade;
Averse sea, small on it a far swimmer died
Small in his skull a mother was calling, goatherds
Drunken pranced among boats, the orange branch,
 light
Of a streetlamp over the breast of a betrothed;
The mountain dropped him from its breast; rosma-
 rin's
Savage scent, an arching deep gorge, purple cliffs
Pink and yellow sky, sea-sheen with their sweets
 enspin
The hunched hugeness, the mountain of groveled
 grief
Jealousy falling forever inward unlike ours
A gigantic phantom fed on by men and flowers

DELOS

Dark pure blue, deep in the light, the sea shakes
white-flecked

Foam-white houses sink, hills as dry as dried fruit
In a gale, in a radiance massive like sex
The boat bounces us and Greeks in business suits;
A thick-built landing stage; an isle low and small
And one old hill on it, cake-shapen; screening
The solitude other islands bulge and sprawl
She lies dazzled, floating, as remote as meaning;
Left among the Hellenistic marble scum
Glistens a vivid phallus; marsh-born here before
At a palm, cleft-suckled, a god he first came
Who hurts and heals unlike love, and whom I fear;
Will he return here? quickly we pluck dry flowers
The sailor blows his conch; Delos disappears

MYKONOS

Brown bare island stretched to July sailing winds
At a beach houses blinding as snow; close-by
A warren of curved white walls; families within
Marine, the women, the girls are strict and shy;
On the saint's eve, the square where they danced
 was small
Like a Greek loft in New York; between candles,
 chairs
A slow row moved stocky in the night sea-chill
The saint's neighbors, the rest of the town not there;
In a bare room, like a sailor's few souvenirs
The sacred objects –vowed small church that mates
 build
Cold during winter– all-powerful Christ repairs
As Son to such a table and sweetness is fulfilled;
The rose like our blood in its perishable bloom
Sweetens with remembrance a white unlocked room

CIAMPINO * ENVOI

Flying from Greece to see Moscow's dancing girl
I look down on Alba Longa, see Jacob's house
And the Pope's, and already the airplane's curls
Show St. Peter's, and the Appian tombs' remorse;
But Jacob, a two year old American
Is running in the garden in August delight;
'Forum not a park, Forum a woods,' he opines
In November quiet there on days less bright;
Now in New York Jacob wants to have my cat
He goes to school, he behaves aggressively
He is three and a half, age makes us do that
And fifty years hence will he love Rome in place of
me?
For with regret I leave the lovely world men made
Despite their bad character, their art is mild

Cups

1

Inside I brought
willows, the tips
bursting,
 blue
iris (I forget
the legend of longlife
they represent)
and the branch of pepper tree
whose pink seeds
lack the passion of most fruit.

On my hands a perfume of pepper.

Outside the rain walks.

There were two.
Their posture
taken out of the wall-
paper (a ghost story)

Jack talked. His
determined privacy against
my public face. The poem
by dictation. A
disturbance in the cone
of weather.

Neither of these
is not-making.

The comic
is a matter of style
as yellow hands mark the worker.

The clown of dignity sits in a tree.
The clown of games hangs there too.
Which is which or where they go—
the point is to make others see
that two men in a tree is clearly
the same thing as poetry.

2

The window washer
returns,
stepping out of his shame.
He was not rich.

There, in the dark window
the negro bus-driver

unfolds the black petals
of that season.

Across town. Out.
Sacramento
into the bargain. The surface
is only manhood.
If he does not masturbate,
the promise is a second chance.

There were two. They both fell down
into the clover where love abounds.
One imagined a negro king.
The other, divers treasures
without being rich.
The poem they gathered
was made of four leaves.
1 for the lip of Amor's crown.
1 for the tree they ran around.
1 for the bed where they lay down.
1 for the comical physical union
which their arms like briars
wrapped around.

3

Unnamed objects. The fear
dispersed like the sound

of angry peacocks.

The white ones. So still
in the aviary.

We opened the rock. This
time I saw the god
offer with out-stretched hand
the heart to be devoured. The
lakes flowed into my hands.
Dante would say the lake
of the heart.

Two men sit in a tree
and wink and spit.
Now this is the tree
where Amor sits.
He gave them each
a trinket of flesh.
The rules, he sighed,
are in the wrinkled grass
when the wind goes by
seeking itself or jealousy.

One imagined two small windows
cut in his skin. His breasts
look out upon the tree.
The other thought the shape
of his tongue was poetry.

The word, he said,
drawn like an arrow,
so fits
into the body of the bird it hits.

4

The shadow of the fish lies
among the rocks. The
shadow of the sage brush
turns the hill blue. The
shadow of the mountain
includes all strangers.

(The strangulation will appear
in the brush fire.)

The coyotes, burned out of their lairs,
follow the railroad. Shapes
of poems
fly out of the dark.

The tree spoke: Love is not love.
Imagine your first stupor. The
effort to untie the strings
of the loins.

The lips endure
the semen of strangers.

It is spring
when the shadow of willows is gone.

5

The intensities
of these branches
of willow
open.

What is it
broke the skin?

How lovely
that jewel
of under the skin.

Neither dark nor light
is my true love.

The blood whose beauty crosses
the hand like money
will fight for that true love.

6

Two milk goats tied

to the wheels of the chuckwagon
(here, so far from water
 tank trucks bring it in.)

He joked that the shepherd
must use goats for a lover.

I have lain back
and imagine my father.

The hands dip out of the water
the shell or sperm dropped
there in passing.

Two men sit in a tree.
How ugly they are
in the bright eye
of this pageantry.
In service to love
is dignity, one cried,
1, 2, 3, the other replied,
you're out
when the dew falls from imagination's dark.

Amor turned geometer,
briefly, of course,
and cut their bodies into triangular parts.
When reassembled
they hung in that tree,

their genitals placed
where their heads should be.

7

Today, we lost both horses
though they were hobbled.

Two milk goats
tied to the wheels of the chuckwagon
where we came riding a water truck.

(I have lain back and imagine my father.
He joked that the sheepherder must choose
one goat with a finer pelt than the rest
for a lover)

This year the herds move
far out into the sagebrush
toward the foothills.
Suddenly, the aspens,
like herds themselves,
fill the gullies. This
is the darker blue
you see from the highway.

The dew fell from imagination's dark
on to our hands where it stuck like bark.

The wheels of your heart, Amor cried,
roll around the edge of the fire.
You might imagine, in service to love,
your hands dip out of the water
the shell or sperm, dropped there in passing
by some *ashen likeness*.

And higher
he seemed than this dark tree
and brighter burned his pageantry.

8

There is no salutation. The
harvesters with gunny sacks
bend picking up jade stones

(Sure that Amor would appear
in sleep. Director. Guide.)

Secret borrowings fit into their hands.

Cold on the tongue
White flecks on the water.

These jade pebbles are true green
when wet.

On the seventh night, the branches parted.

The other replied,
How photographic. Amor doesn't appear
on demand. He's more like a snake skin.
If he fits, he lets you in
or sheds your body against the rocks.

I slept in a fort.
My bed pushed up against the log
enclosure. At 3:30 his ankles pressed
against each side of my head.
When I woke crying for help
he rose near the kitchen door
dressed as a hunter.

The other replied,
Amor born like a cup trembles
at the lip. Superstitions fit
into your hands.

Thou hast returned to thy house.

The other replied,
Torn loose from the eaves,
the blood trembles at the lips.

Nine fetters on thy feet
Nine crossings of the street

Nine suppers where they meet

Nine words of loss repeat
this and that

Nine hunters cross the field
Nine lovers yield
their right of way

Two came fighting out of the dark.

9

The sour smell of laundry day.
The steamed-up windows,
initialed and etched.

Saving electricity, only the kitchen
at the back lights up,
a shaft across the congoleum
where the Persian pattern
departs from real leaves.

Briefly, the car lights
follow the water drops.
The desert returns
through the shiny glass.
The rattlesnake bears his fruit.

So he stretched for the pear tree

branch. It was the flower
before the fruit.

Upon that tree there was a ring
HI HO HUM
The ring surrounded the darkest part.
HA HA HA
The ring imagined a marriage bout.
FIRE FIRE FIRE

Out on the pond, the striders
wander.

And yonder the sour
bush.

10

High on stilts, the black water tank
leaks. A pond rises by the railbed.

The tracks sing, they say,
meaning the beat and whirr
the steel carries.

Willows, starwort,
water striders appear in the desert.

The telegrapher's key between thumb

and fingers. The message
help up to the speeding train
on a willow hoop.

Amor entered disguised as grass. You both
hoped your seed would fall among the roots
of this tree and there grow up a second tree
and guardian.

WHAT IS THAT WRINKLES UNDER THE ROOT?

SKIN, SEMEN, AN ARM AND A FOOT.








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

The wheat goes unharvested.
The spears broken.

Uncle Mitch wrote westerns.
His sentences broken. He
liked to whistle between fragments.

There was a large bell which
rang out — the stockade
protected — until what history
calls the Meadow Mountain
Massacre — Black Hawk
died in our house, stabbed

in his savage belly —
Aunt Celestia sat down
with the Indians — the
feast at our table —
the rain — the salt —
falling against the horses —
it was too dark — they
ride out hunting — the bell
rang —
the stockade grew in our hearts —
supperless — we hid
in the brush — the color
of raspberries — the fire
consumed —

The rider who leads us out 
stops midway  the flank
of his horse caught fire 
discovered their nests  bunched
and tangled the rattlesnakes 
curled at the edge 
you ride for the dark 

Where Amor sits, the body renews itself,
twists    

inhabits the rights of poetry.

The turbulence. Replies.
 The dark picked up,
 deposited.

A sediment
 like what one knows
 is there under the starwort.

Plus cuts on the hands
 from gardening and such
 other grasping
 as fits
 this season.

You take the far side
 of the street from the bus-stop
 Geary and Presidio
 following the car lights,
 shop-windows, street-lamps.

So that. A path immerses
 without the neccessary guide.

The breath stutters
 in limbs where Amor swings.
 The realism he's after cheats and sings.
 He drops the steel scales of his body down

where one eye out, the lover turns
round and round.

The Muse requires a politics
where the tongue meets
in the thick of it
the sour sweat.

The milk of her breasts
divides again and again
among the thyrsus bearers
and then among those who wear the hue
of her nipples. The initiates are few
but they stamp on the ground
where her skin has fallen.

What falls from the tree
renews itself in the guise
of poetry.

The guide
rides out of the dark
with a body shaped
from the sluffing bark.

The Painters

1.

I rushed into the room.
Albert looked up from the pillow.
He was growing a moustache.

“Why didn’t you let me know?” I cried.

He turned over and faced the wall.
“I thought of you,” he said.

2.

You’d better look out, Larry;
someone approaches with the
wildcat by the tail.

He’s very good. He does not worry
about whether to use impasto
or not to use impasto.

Have you been lying down on the job?

Can you tempt the kitty back?

Can you tie yourself down again
in that complicated fashion?

Can you draw blood? Will your new wife
be ashamed?

The Poet

The opportunity is great
to overhear him.
He is recorded on all the buses.

He has fallen down in his fit
and no one can pick him up.
Nothing is allowed to be touched

by his friends.
You will have to listen.
Across the border you can burn his poems.

His conversation is everywhere,
on all the buses.
He just talks all the time.

“Rocks under me are hard”

Rocks under me are hard
but my own self, in a pink prison
reclining, cannot complete the image.
Nothing in me is hard.

It is important how long I last
but not seasonal.
This summer is not mine
and I do not join the fall.

When I am gone, perhaps
this winter, nothing hoped for
will remain, no thoughts, like Deer
abounding in a Park of Ease.

D. W.

I wouldn't die without love
but I'd desert my house
and land.

For a while

I could be
simple and smart like grass,
and later,
woods over my heart.

Love in Three Acts: a Swiss Play

ACT ONE

THE ROLL

Youth, about 39 years of age, enters immaculate Swiss bakery shop. Young girl, about 34, serves in back of the counter.

Girl: A good day to you sir.

Youth: A good day to *you* miss.

G: May it be the same as usual?

Y: Yes, I should like one of your little rolls if you please.

G: Gladly sir, may I wrap it for you?

Y: I don't have to go far, but if it isn't too much trouble —

G: Here you are sir, can you carry it like this?

Y: Certainly, I thank you very much. And how much does it make?

G: That would make fifteen centimes and two little ration stamps.

Y: Here you are miss, two little stamps and

fifteen centimes.

G: Thank you kindly sir.

Y: Thank *you* miss.

G: You're welcome.

Y: *You're* welcome.

G: Good bye sir.

Y: Good bye miss.

(Outside the shop the youth stands still, looks up at the sky and exclaims with rapture:)

Oh wonder! She smiled when she said I was welcome, I think — I think she loves me!

ACT TWO

THE AD

Two days later. The young girl in her mother's kitchen. She is stirring a pot of soup with one hand and holding a newspaper in the other.

Girl: Yes, mother dear, the soup is boiling, it will be ready at sixteen minutes after seven.

Do you mind awfully eating a minute later than usual tonight?

Voice of mother: Well I'm glad you let me know. Did you put in the salt yet?

G: I'm doing that now mother. (*aside:*) I wish I knew why he wants me to read the newspaper. He was very excited when he came to the shop to buy his roll today. He blushed and said: "I beg of you to read the evening paper," then turned around abruptly, dropped his roll, picked it up again and left. (*reading:*) "A happy event has taken place in our zoo. Our South American llama has given birth —" he can't mean that — "One of the beloved fathers of our town celebrates his 95th birthday tomorrow in perfect physical and mental condition. May the celebrant for many more fruitful years to come —" it must be something else. Oh my goodness, the soup! I better add another pinch of salt.

V of M: Daughter dear, are you minding the soup?

G: Yes mother, I'm just adding the salt. (*aside:*) I'll look on the back page — (*reading:*) "Advertisements—classified — miscellaneous — To the lovely maiden who sells rolls in the Model Bakeryshop — the young man who adores her" Heavens? It's from him! (*she drops the spoon*) " — My

friends call me handsome, I have a secure position, come from a good family and am using this means to ask you to become my companion for life—'' Oh, the darling!

V of M: I smell something burning, it must be the soup, Daughter dear!

G: Oh mother! I put too much salt in and I burnt the soup but he loves me! It's the young man I've been dreaming about! He's handsome and charming — and he comes from a good family!

ACT THREE

THE MOON

Five days later. Moonlight on the Rhine. The Youth and the Girl are sitting on a bench on the stern of a small steamboat.

Youth: To think that only a week ago I used to to look at you secretly and from far for fear you might get angry — and now we're already holding — (*he takes her hand but she pulls it away*) — eh — sitting on the same bench together.

Girl: I too used to look at you that way and now

— it's still like a dream —

Sailor: To unauthorized persons aboard our steamers the sitting on benches which are not illuminated is strictly prohibited after sunset. Please cooperate by moving immediately toward the center of the vessel. Thank you.

G Y: Oh pardon us — of course — we didn't know. (*They move to another bench close to a lamp. Embarrassed silence*)

G: (*after a while*) It was a lovely idea to take this boat ride on the river in the moonlight.

Y: Yes, I thought of it because my father is a stockholder of the company and gets six free tickets every year. Next week we can go to the zoo, my father owns some stock there too.

G: How wonderful. And when we have children we can take them to see the animals without buying tickets — (*blushing:*) Oh I shouldn't have said that.

Y: Darling! (*he kisses her*)

Sailor: Tickets please.

Y: Oh of course — I was just looking for them — my father's a stockholder — here you are.

S: At the last plenary session the board of directors has declared the stockholders' tickets invalid for excursions undertaken during the period of the full moon. That will be two francs and fifty-five centimes plus

a fine of twenty-five centimes for not purchasing the tickets prior to embarking.

Y: I'm sorry, I should have known. (*paying the sailor*) You see we are going to be engaged.

S: Allow me to congratulate you (*he leaves*)

G: Darling, this is the most beautiful day of my life since the day I watched the sun rise in the Alps with my mother.

Y: And for me too since the day I was promoted in the office. We'll always remember this night on the Rhine together in the light of the full moon —

(*a crash, followed by a commotion in the front of the ship*)

Voice of sailor through a loudspeaker:

Attention! The ship has sprung a leak. There is no cause for alarm, your money will be refunded. Preserve the stubs of your tickets and prepare to abandon ship. Thank you.

G: We're sinking — We'll have to swim — my hair will get wet — I'm afraid

Y: We'll be safe — we're not far from shore — I'll save you if necessary (*he grabs a life preserver*) we'll hold on to this — don't worry (*he puts his arm around her waist*)

G: B-but darling

Y: It's alright, we're engaged (*they kiss*)

G: I'm not afraid any more, as long as I'm with you — and the life preserver.

- Y: It's the most exciting moment of my life.
G: Someday we'll tell our grandchildren about it.
Y: Are you ready darling—here we go—one two three — jump! (*holding on to the life preserver, their arms around each other, they jump overboard. A cloud passes in front of the moon*)

The Mountain

Here is a mountain I am unable to encompass
Except after many deliberate days in the sun
That keeps constantly burning through the cold air.

Along the slanting edge of a massive shoulder
Grow myriads of short flowers springing
From the wet earth soaked with melting snow.

Above the airy sparse woods, pouring
Between the tree trunks with still coldness,
Like the sudden shock of a mountain pool,

I circle with care to the higher meadow slopes
Through breathless shadows under the final rocks
Uncovered below the unprotected sun,

Until over the snow at last on the rocky summit
I survey across the blue and sunny valleys
Filled with giant slowly penetrable forests

The distant peaks I have not yet walked over
Countless and all different from each other
Projecting and broken in the transparent sun.

To Laurence

A baby in his crib is afraid of the doorknob
And can't sleep until it is covered with a cloth,
A cloth as soft and intimate as death.
For there is the doorknob, withdrawn into its sparkle,
Not to be transformed, neither by shame,
Neither by admiration nor by love.

And so with the fierce fire of his babyish love
He tries to consume the transparent doorknob
Whose reflection, however, turns his love to shame,
Like a smoldering fire smothered under cloth.
It is no use though, because the sparkle
Can not be extinguished short of death.

And he can not erase the knob with death
However small death is, or weaker than love,
Familiar and humorous—instead the sparkle
Causes death to be erased by the knob,
In an airy wave like a magician's cloth,
Leaving a smoky residue of shame.

When night is erased he wakes up into his shame
Always growing further away from death
Which hangs over the end of his crib, a discarded
cloth,

Serving as a useful rest from shame, as love
Does not, against the knowledge of the doorknob
Based on no memory to light its sparkle.

A baby born with an original sparkle
Is drawn away from death and into shame.
After a while he watches the forever watching
doorknob

Whose watching destruction can stop, but not death,
Nor the destruction caused by love,
Giving and taking nothing from the covering cloth.

Then he leaves his crib and discards the cloth.
This begins the transformation of his sparkle,
Very gradually like a growth of love,
While the sparkle turns into something close to
shame,
Which as long as it lasts leads away from death
Enduring all but destruction, like a doorknob.

Still the doorknob watches under the cloth,
And a temporary death brightens the sparkle
In the narrow difference between shame and love.

At the End of Summer

When the hill is empty
And the twigs in the ferns unbroken
And the crows caw in the hollow woods
And the float lies in the thistles out of reach of the tide

When the happy people
Have taken the beauty with them
From the waves purple in the south west wind
From the brown grass and impersonal calls of the birds

Then the one who remains
Turns his thoughts inward
To a mirror world hollow as the forest
With the easterly bright definition that comes before
sunset

“When the Morning Train...”

When the morning train blows at the station
Where shining puddles remaining after rain
Reflect the autumn colors and new green
Already yellowed by the rising sun,
I remember a night of one car after
Another swishing through a film of water,
And a dead skunk, squashed against the asphalt,
Spreading its perfume that fortells the frost.

The new air still includes an aching
Left from the effort of a dusty summer,
Declining—always more a mordant green
Of branches moving in the windy dark,
Unable to let go their load of leaves,
Beyond a screen door that filters in the cold.

